



# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## December 2021

## **St Oswald's C of E Academy Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

St Oswald's Early Years is underpinned by our school vision:

**Imagine with all your mind,  
Believe with all your heart,  
Achieve with all your might.**

**Our school values are interwoven through our daily play and learning:**

- **friendship**
- **co-operation,**
- **stewardship**
- **service**
- **perseverance**
- **courage**

**The Early Years curriculum, in line with the rest of the school, is designed to develop inquisitive, inspired and independent learners.**

### **Introduction**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”  
*Early Years Foundation Stage Profile- Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is statutory and is detailed under the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Practical Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The new Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum became compulsory for all settings in September 2021. Our policy outlines the **intent, implementation and impact** of our approach to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

### **INTENT**

We follow the statutory framework and guidance detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage by using our experience to observe, plan and teach children in the early years of their lives.

We provide a broad and balanced EYFS curriculum based on first hand experiences and purposeful interactions through carefully planned adult-led and child- initiated activities. We always strive to provide activities and opportunities based on the children's own interests. Our early years' team ensures the children are learning in an environment that is safe and secure, providing opportunities in which children are able to explore, learn and achieve. We aim to

: • provide children, who are at the beginning of their school journey, with experiences that are happy and positive;

- foster a love of learning and develop enquiring minds;
- offer a stimulating and inspiring provision where children feel safe and secure enough to take risks within their learning and their play;
- offer an enriched curriculum, providing children with a wide range of new and exciting experiences;
- provide opportunities for children to develop greater knowledge, understanding and skills in each area of learning including Mathematics and Literacy;
- encourage children to develop independence within a nurturing environment;
- develop the children's social and emotional well-being through our school values based curriculum;
- build positive relationships and work in partnership with parents/carers (recognising that they are their child's first and foremost educator), and professionals to support every child to develop and learn.

## **IMPLEMENT**

Children learn best when they:

- have access to highly engaging activities that develop enquiry and investigation skills, building on what they know and working practically to find out how things work;
- use their senses to explore and investigate;
- access resources independently, allowing them to develop their learning and continue to investigate;
- collaborate with others, sharing their learning experiences.

We have developed a carefully planned curriculum which enables all children to achieve their potential with the aim of working towards the Early Learning Goals, by the end of the EYFS. In order to do this, we observe and assess the children to determine what they know and then move their learning on through interactions, challenging questions and next steps. Opportunities are created for the children to engage in adult-led and child-initiated opportunities that encourage children to explore, create, investigate, rehearse, practise, repeat and discover whilst developing of characteristics of effective learning.

Characteristics of effective learning are defined in the EYFS framework as:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Our teaching shows awareness of the different ways and rates in which children develop and learn. We use a multi-sensory, highly stimulating and fun, play-based approach to learning. All staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and attainment and promote a "can do" attitude at all times. Learning takes place indoors and outdoors. Children have a daily session of Mathematics and Literacy which includes reading and writing. They have a daily session of phonics which is taught as a class. Children joining our Reception classes are given reading books to take home which matches their secure phonic knowledge. Parents are asked to sign a reading record to confirm that their child has read to an adult at home. We hear children read these books three times a week in their reading groups and encourage children to read a range of other materials in school as well. Each child also takes home a library book to share with families.

Children are encouraged to experience all areas of the learning environment, including our outdoor area, every day and in all weathers.

### **Play in EYFS**

We value play and the learning it brings.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a combination of adult-led and child-led activities. Through play, children explore and have learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They practise and develop ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules thereby developing emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Children have the opportunity to think creatively and problem solve alongside others. They express fears or relive experiences in controlled and safe situations as well as re-enact positive experiences building self-awareness and self-esteem. In Nursery, almost all the children's learning is through play. Accompanying this play are short group sessions for music, maths and language. In Reception, the children spend the majority of each day engaged in play but they also have sessions of Literacy, Maths and Phonics daily. Towards the end of Reception, there is a move towards more adult-led sessions and a greater emphasis on the preparation of children for the more formal learning they will do in Year One.

### **Inclusion in EYFS**

The class teacher leads on provision for children who experience barriers to their learning which relate to a special educational need, overseen by the SENDCO (Special Educational Needs and Disability Co-ordinator) and in line with the school's SEN and Inclusion Policy.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by:

- setting realistic and challenging expectations. We aim for most children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by planning for different children including those who have special educational needs, those who are more able, those with disabilities or medical needs, those who are vulnerable and those who have English as an additional language;

- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued;
- using resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping and to which all children have equal access;
- monitoring children’s progress and providing support where necessary, within the resources available to the school. This may include a phased transition programme dependent on a child’s specific SEN needs;
- providing specific targets detailed in Individual Education Plans (IEP) and using support programmes of work such as those provided by the Speech and Language Therapist;
- working collaboratively with parents and carers, the SENDCo and other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Parent Support Advisors;

### **The EYFS Curriculum**

The EYFS is statutory and is important in its own right as a basis for developing essential skills such as listening, speaking, persistence and collaborating with each other. The three prime areas within it cover the knowledge and skills which provide the foundations for progress in learning and development. They are Communication and Language (C&L), Physical Development (PD) and Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED). These areas are applied in, and reinforced by, the four specific areas of Literacy (Lit), Mathematics (Mat), Knowledge and Understanding of the World(UW) and Exploring Arts Development (EAD).

The Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals guide our long term planning together with half-termly topics. Activities are planned to meet the children’s needs and interests and we ensure that every child has opportunities to develop in all areas of the EYFS framework’s curriculum.

Weekly planning focuses on day-to-day organisation of activities which are always designed to provide challenging and enjoyable experiences. We recognise that children learn in different ways and this is reflected in our planning. All planning is evaluated regularly and adapted in response to the children’s needs, interests and stages of development.

A rich and varied ‘enabling’ environment is planned and continuously developed with varied multicultural and inclusive resources being available to children including, but not limited to:

- Books about people which celebrate diversity
- Dolls, puppets and small world figures which reflect our society
- Toy cooking utensils and food to which different ethnic groups can relate.

## **Assessment in EYFS**

When children start in Nursery and Reception the teacher assesses each child's interests, level of attainment and stage of development using professional judgement as measured against the EYFS framework. Language skills are also assessed using Wellcomm screening.

The teachers use this time to get to know the children, discovering their unique personalities, finding out about their interests, and learning about their likes and dislikes. The teachers take into account observations that have been shared with them by parents and carers. The school's baseline assessment that is completed with each child, as well as the national baseline (introduced in September 2021), informs teachers' planning and ensures activities are planned to ensure that every child makes progress.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure planning reflects individual and group needs. Once a term, summative assessments are entered on to O Track which is the assessment tool that is used by the whole school. Intervention is delivered when gaps are identified in children's learning or when children are not making expected progress. This provides children with opportunities to rehearse key skills and develop these in a variety of ways.

Formative assessment is continuous and evidence for this assessment is gained from observations of the children, examples of child-initiated activity and work completed, in Reception, in their Maths, Phonics and English books. Early Years' practitioners keep observational records and examples of children's work. These are kept in learning journals. Each child has their own learning journal and they are available to children and parents throughout the year. Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to these as well. Photographs and comments are also sent to parents via 'class dojo' which is used throughout the school. The children are given regular opportunities to look at the evidence in these books and comment on what they have learnt. These learning journals are shared with parents and Year One teachers.

Meetings with individual parents/ carers are held twice a year to ensure that they are informed of their child's progress and to discuss the child's next steps in learning. In addition to these parents' meetings, parents receive an annual written report about their child's progress which includes the EYFS Profile, stating whether a child is working towards or has attained expected levels in each Area of Learning.

## **Working with Parents and Carers**

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first, and most influential, educators and we value and first the importance of working with parents and carers. We do this by inviting parents and carers to

- attend an information-sharing session during the term before their child starts Nursery or Reception;
- visit the school with their child prior to starting Nursery and Reception;

- attend a variety of events such as the Christmas Nativity, Sports Day, Weekly Stay and Play and curriculum focused sessions;
- meet with class teachers to discuss children's progress at least twice a year;
- discuss any concerns they have about their child with the teachers and teaching assistants;
- listen to their children read three times a week and to write a comment about their children's reading in a reading record book.

Additionally, we will keep parents and carers informed about their child's progress and attainment in school by:

- providing an EYFS Profile for every child;
- completing a learning journal for every child and sharing this with children and their parents/carers throughout the year;
- speaking to parents/carers about any concerns that we may have about a child;
- working with parents/carers to support children who are identified as having Special Educational Needs for any reason;
- providing parents/carers with an annual written report about their child's progress and attainment in school.

### **Transition**

We have three specific transitions during children's time in EYFS at St Oswald's C of E Academy and each of these is managed with care. The first transition is when the children start Nursery. For many of our children, this will be their first experience of any type of setting or pro-longed period of time away from their parents/carers. Parents and children are supported through this transition. Every family receives a home visit from the Nursery staff before the Nursery sessions start.

The second transition occurs when children start Reception. Most of the children from our Nursery will go on to join our Reception classes. However, there will also be many children who are new to the school at this point. Moving from part-time schooling to full-time can also be daunting for both parents and children so we aim to make this transition as smooth as possible.

All children who are new to the school receive either a home or nursery visit from the Reception staff.

The third and final transition that children have within the EYFS is that from Reception to Year One. To ensure that this is as smooth as possible children are given opportunities to meet their new teachers and to visit their new classroom. The Reception teachers and Year One teachers have opportunities to meet together to discuss each child's attainment, progress, characteristics of learning and other relevant information such as special needs or medical requirements. At this meeting Year One teachers receive each child's Foundation Stage profile.

## **Safeguarding Children and their Welfare**

Children's safety is paramount and we have a very comprehensive Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy which we adhere to at all times. If there are concerns about a child's safety, parents will be consulted unless the school feels that by doing so, the child may be in danger of further harm. If parents or carers have concerns about a child's safety, they should speak to the class teacher or the Designated Safeguarding Lead as soon as possible. Both Nursery and Reception classes have a member of staff who is trained in Paediatric First Aid and follows the First Aid Policy when administering first aid to children.

During the autumn term children in Reception are taught Warwickshire Council's Protective Behaviours Curriculum..

Staff are always available and willing to help children with toileting. If a child has a special need and is not yet toilet trained, an intimate care plan will be created for the child and the school will work with parents, the child and the school's nursing service to support a child in using the toilet. Under these circumstances, parents are usually asked to provide spare sets of underwear and a change of clothes. The school does have nappy changing facilities.

Fruit and milk are provided daily for all children in EYFS. All children in

Reception are entitled to a free school meal daily. All dietary and faith requirements can be catered for. These dinners provide children with a healthy meal at lunch time and include Non-Halal, Halal, vegan and vegetarian options. If children have specific dietary requirements these can be met through arrangement with the meal provider. Parents who are in receipt of certain benefits are encouraged to apply for a grant which can be used towards school uniform and to access extra-curricular activities. All parents are encouraged to apply for these grants. Successful applications ensure that the children benefit and it also provides additional funding for the school to use to meet children's needs.

All policies can be found on our school website.

### **IMPACT**

- All children make excellent progress in Nursery and Reception, from their personal baselines. Many reach the ELG in many areas of development by the end of the summer term in Reception.
- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning which help them through the rest of school as they engage in a more formal way of learning.
- Children develop the ability to manage risks, show resilience and perseverance in the face of challenges and show they can communicate effectively within a group of peers.
- Children enjoy being independent in managing themselves and their learning.
- Class teachers make formative assessments which inform planning and ensure that all pupils build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace.

- Parents/ carers are pleased with their child's progress.
- Parents/ carers have contributed to their child's learning and they have had opportunities to support them in their learning.
- Everyone is included.
- The children have high levels of wellbeing and involvement.
- The children take pride in all that they do, always striving to do their best.
- The children are kind, respectful and honest and they demonstrate inclusive attitudes to all.

### **Policy Implementation**

- The Academy Governance Committee is responsible for the implementation, review and evaluation of this policy.
- This policy is freely available on the school's website and a hard copy is available, on request, from the school's office.
- This policy will be implemented in December 2021.
- It will be reviewed in October 2024 or before, if legislation changes.