



Thameside Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

December 2020

Introduction

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.(Early Years Statutory Framework 2017)

Aims

These aims relate to the four EYFS themes and principles (see Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2017).

- **Unique Child** – To value and respect each child as a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - To promote and develop positive relationships through which children learn to be strong and independent
- **Enabling Environments** – To provide a safe, stimulating, challenging indoor and outdoor environment, which responds to the needs of all children, allowing them to explore and take risks.
- **Learning and Development** – To recognise the need for children to learn and develop in different ways across the curriculum and promote a love of learning.

Unique Child

We aim to achieve these aims through;

- A high-quality transition programme that helps staff to get to know the child and their family
- Staff considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child when planning the curriculum
- Valuing and respecting every child and family.
- Staff engaging in high quality adult interactions, which are sensitive and adaptive to the needs of individual children.
- Staff supporting children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- Staff identifying any need for additional support
- Staff keeping children safe
- Staff promoting children's good health and well-being

Positive Relationships

- Positive relationships are built on key person relationships in early years settings
- Practitioners establish warm, caring relationships that foster a sense of belonging
- Positive relationships are supportive of the child's own efforts and independence
- All families are welcomed and valued.
- Staff seek to engage parents and/or carers to support their child's learning and development at home, through face to face meetings, workshops, regular communications, learning journals, websites etc.)
- Positive relationships across the EYFS are consistent in setting clear boundaries
- Parents / Carers have the opportunity to review their child's progress regularly and to contribute to assessments

Enabling Environments

- Learning environments both inside and out, enable successful learning by all children
- The learning environment offers stimulating resources that are relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- The learning environment offers rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- Learning environments are well organised and promote children's independent learning
- The environment supports children to take risks and explore.
- The environment provides challenge and evolves to address children's next steps.
- Children are involved in planning and maintaining the environment
- Children have opportunities to access outdoor learning throughout the day.

Learning and Development

- Staff listen to the child, parents and other relevant adults then plan, design and implement a curriculum that meets the needs of the children, providing challenging and enjoyable experiences across all areas of learning
- Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities
- The content of the EYFS curriculum is taught systematically so that children are ready for the next stage of their education
- Children demonstrate their attitudes and behaviours through the key characteristics of effective learning; playing and exploring, active learning and creative thinking and thinking critically.
- Children demonstrate their positive attitudes to learning through high levels of engagement

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning and development, all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The Prime Areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the main focus for the youngest children.

The three *prime areas* are:

- **Communication and language** - development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** - involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** - involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The Specific Areas provide a context for building on learning and development beyond the prime areas. It is through the *specific areas* that the *prime areas* are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measure
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

It is a statutory requirement that each child's level of development must be assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in the final term of the EYFS. The EYFS Profile provides families and practitioners with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, skills, characteristics of effective learning, understanding and abilities, as well as recording their progress against expected levels for the end of EYFS.

Furthermore, it enables Year 1 teachers to plan an appropriate curriculum for the autumn term of Year 1.

At the Vale Academy Trust, we enable children to achieve a 'Good Level of Development' by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by:

- ensuring practitioners access EYFS training and support
- ensuring that EYFS practice reflects EYFS principles (see above)
- regularly monitoring quality of teaching and learning
- regularly monitoring the quality of the learning environment
- regularly monitoring children's profiles
- tracking each child's attainment and progress
- developing and implementing plans which support improvement in the EYFS
- taking part in interschool moderation activities to ensure accuracy of judgements

In the EYFS, planning follows In the Moment, Medium Term and daily plans which are based around broad topics. These plans are used by EYFS practitioners as a guide for weekly and daily planning. However, we alter these in response to the needs, interests and observations of the children.

We use observational assessment to understand children's learning. We watch, listen and interact as children engage in everyday activities, events and experiences, and demonstrate their specific knowledge, skills and understanding.

We also make formal assessments at key points throughout the year. These observations are recorded in children's individual Learning Journey Book. These also contain information from families and other settings. Families are encouraged to contribute to the Learning Journeys through Learning Journey Sharing and their child's achievements using wow slips. Families can access their child's Learning Journeys throughout the year, with a final report of children's achievements in the summer term.

Online tracking grids (eProfile) are updated 3 x per year following the initial Baseline assessment in Sept (Dec, March and June). This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the Academy and whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be entering, developing, secure within the Development Matters age-bands. Data is analysed and any gaps are identified and addressed.

In June, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child and data is submitted to the local authority. A summary is shared with parents in an end of year report.

The child's next teacher uses this information to plan for the year ahead.

Welfare requirements

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults that care for them. The Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2017) sets out the safeguarding and welfare requirements for all EYFS settings.

EYFS Co-ordinators within the Vale Academy Trust complete the Oxfordshire County Council's 'MUSTS' Audit annually to ensure that these requirements are being met effectively.

In the Vale Academy Trust, we

- promote the welfare of children
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively (see Behaviour Management Policy)
- ensure that all adults who work with children in a supervised/unsupervised context are suitable to do so
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- maintain appropriate records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

The health, safety and wellbeing of all our children are of paramount importance to all of the adults in our school. The governors and staff of the Vale Academy Trust, both teaching and non-teaching, fully recognise the contribution they make to safeguarding children.

Healthy Snacks

All children in the EYFS are provided with a healthy snack each day. Children are given the choice of milk or water with their snack. All children have access to water during the day, at all times.

Transitions

Effective transitions provide children with the security and support which enables them to be successful and motivated learners. Smooth transitions are achieved through strong partnership working between families, practitioners and leadership teams. Key to smooth transitions is ensuring that children remain the focus of the process. At the Vale Academy Trust, we work hard to overcome the challenges of the transition process.

Starting in Nursery

There are opportunities for prospective parents/carers and children to visit the nursery during a nursery session. On acceptance of a place in Nursery, parents/carers and children are given the opportunity to have two "settling in" sessions. The first session is with parents/carers and will include a short presentation detailing the nursery routine, getting to know the staff and a little look at what we do each day. The children then have an hour to explore their new setting with parents/carers. Parents/Carers are invited back for another settling in session where children may wish to stay without their parent/carer for around two hours. Following this, there will be a home visit organised by the nursery teacher and one additional member of staff. This is a great opportunity for them to ask any questions or discuss any concerns in a more relaxed environment. It also helps the nursery staff to get to know the family before their child starts nursery.

Starting in Reception

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

This is an opportunity for staff to;

- To hand out a Welcome Pack
- Explain about uniform, school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag if requested
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to Reception

New class sessions - The children are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. A home visit is organised whereby the Reception teacher and one additional member of the EYFS team will come along to get to know the child's family. Arrangements are also made, where possible, for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting (if not part of the schools Nursery).

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school activities as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children and the rest of the school. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend sessions in their new class during the summer term.

Special arrangements are made for children with additional needs to ensure that they are supported to make a smooth transition into their new class.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in the EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The VAT School Improvement team, Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring of EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy will be reviewed in Dec 2021 or as necessary.