

Otterham Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy January 2026



Version 4

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to five years old. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. The reception year builds on previous knowledge acquired at home and, if applicable, in a pre-school setting. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being
- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts & Design

The principles of the EYFS are grouped into four themes:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

These four guiding themes work together to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EYFS.

Teaching and Learning Style

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- The careful planning curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of EYFS;
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;

- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self management;
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- The clear aims for our work and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do.

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves, take responsibility for their actions and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children, as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They are able to express fears or make mistakes in controlled and safe situations.

Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This may be detailed on an Individual Education Plan.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS. The Early Learning Goals are in line with the objectives in the primary framework for literacy and numeracy. The practice guidance for the EYFS is used to support practitioners in planning an appropriate curriculum for all children. Our medium term plans outline intended learning and possible activity and resource ideas. These are flexible to reflect children's interests and stage of development. Weekly planning is informed by ongoing, observational assessment.

Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of observation and some recorded work. This involves all practitioners working in Reception. This enables the teacher to highlight particular areas for development. This information is used to inform planning.

During the children's first term in the reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using regular and close observations, as well as discussions with the children. An initial baseline assessment is recorded and used to plan the next steps in learning for groups and individuals. At the end of each term, Little Wandle phonic assessments are recorded and discussed with parents at parental consultation meetings.

Final assessments using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile are reported to the Local Authority. In addition, the parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress towards the Early Learning Goals and details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and using Class Dojo to inform parents of activities in school;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Our open door policy also facilitates this.
- Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances.
- Arranging activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

If you would like this in a different format, please contact the school

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