



Village Primary School Early Years Policy

November 2021

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 applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Village Primary School children are admitted to Nursery on their third birthday and Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Village Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims and Objectives

We endeavour to provide the best educational opportunities for the children within our care in a secure, happy and hard working environment. Within this environment, we are committed to providing equality of opportunity, allowing all children to reach their full potential.

Inclusion

In our school we believe that all of 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 EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. 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.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their requirements. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement.

The school's SENDCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

Positive Relationships

At Village Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Parents are the most important people in their children's lives and always will be, so we need their help to ensure that all the children progress and achieve success in reaching their potential. When children come to Nursery, we build on the foundations that have been laid and work in partnership to continue and develop this. The partnership between the family and the EYFS staff is crucial to children's happiness and development. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Sharing information about the curriculum through meetings e.g. reading.
- Providing opportunities for parents/carers to attend social events.
- Inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests and time to work with and help the children and staff in a variety of ways.
- Meeting with parents/carers to share children's achievements and together discuss next steps for development.
- Encouraging home school links through support with the home school reading programme.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the staff if there are any concerns.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: class assemblies, sports day etc.

The EYFS Curriculum

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and the delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves 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.

- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Planning

Long Term Planning

The school Nursery and Reception classes currently organise the curriculum through agreed topics based mainly on the seasons and festivals over the period of the academic year. The topics cover areas that are familiar, of interest to young children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The long term cycle planning reflects a balance of the areas of learning and development from the EYFS.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. Possible learning objectives, assessment opportunities, activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

Short Term Planning

The weekly plan is informed in two ways. Firstly, through on going observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. Through this, learning objectives for the next short term plan are identified. Secondly, it is informed by referring to the medium term plans containing objectives and activities/experiences in the half termly topic. We use objective planning in Nursery to support the children when they are initiating their own play in the areas.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet or rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales to being indoors. Outdoor play allows the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Observations

EYFS staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys by using EExAT learning journey app. Where relevant, the EYFS staff endeavour to move the children's learning on at the point when the observation is taken place. Next steps are delivered immediately to ensure that the children make progress straight away.

Assessment

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging or Expected. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps progress records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

During the first six weeks in Nursery and Reception, EYFS staff will carry out a baseline assessment of the children in order to inform planning. Children in Nursery who start throughout the year on their 3rd birthday will have the baseline assessment carried out within 2-3 weeks of them starting Nursery. Using the Target Tracker assessment tool, the children in EYFS will be assessed 3 times a year in both Nursery and Reception. Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We also share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

Transition

At Village Primary School we plan transition time and starting school arrangements carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Nursery – Parents of all new Nursery starters will be invited to an induction meeting which are held twice a year. They will get to meet their child's new teacher and other key staff whilst learning more about the Nursery curriculum and setting. Parents are then encouraged and invited to sign up for a home visit and a Nursery visit.

Our Nursery will work in partnership with parents. As parents are a child's first educator, this will help ensure the best outcomes for the children. The first step of this partnership is a home visit for family before a child starts Nursery. We believe that this enables parents and children to meet members of the Nursery staff in the place where they feel most at ease, at home.

Two members of Village early years team, one being the allocated key person, will carry out the visits. Parents will be notified of the visit in advance and a convenient time arranged. Village staff will wear their ID badges and take a mobile phone; this number will be left in the School office and has key contacts, including the Police, pre-stored. A timetable of visits will be left in Nursery and the School office. The session times will be discussed and confirmed as far as possible including any extended hours. A date and time for the child's first visit to nursery will also be given.

If a home visit is not possible, parents/carers will be invited to visit Nursery at a mutually agreed time to meet the child's key worker and to complete the relevant paperwork.

If School based staff are aware of special circumstances or arrangements for home visiting, these must be discussed with the Headteacher in advance who will decide on the necessary additional arrangements required to carry out the visit.

The following safe working practice should be read when planning home visits to ensure that staff and families are kept safe.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the early years' staff to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the early years as part of the whole school monitoring system.

This policy will be reviewed before the start of each academic year and will evolve to incorporate the views of all staff concerned.

Home Visits

Home visits are a crucial in the start of making important relationships with the child and family.

Two members of the Nursery staff will visit the family in their home. This provides essential time for the staff to get to know the family and for the family to talk about their child and ask any questions in the comfort of their own home. Staff will carry out a home visit questionnaire which is then

added to the child's learning journey. Transition and starting procedures will also be discussed at the home visit.

Nursery visit – each new starter is invited to a Nursery visit with their parents for a half an hour session. During this session, the child will have an opportunity to play either indoors or outdoors, learn about the routines of Nursery, find out where things are in Nursery and also have the opportunity to sit and share a story and take part in singing with a small group.

Starting Nursery – Parents are given the option to stagger their child's entry into Nursery. 1 hour the first day, 2 hours the second day and 3 hours the third day. EYFS staff leave this decision with the parents as they know their child best. We are also flexible with these arrangements and always see how a child settles.

Starting 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 go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to reception

The children in Reception will be given the opportunity for at least 6 transition sessions throughout the Summer Term where the new starters will spend time in the Reception class. Throughout the year, the children in Nursery become familiar with the Reception staff and rules and routines as they spend daily time together in the outdoor area. Children who are new to the school will be invited to the 6 transition sessions.

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 assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'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 caring for them.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Village Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.

- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Village's Safeguarding Children Policy).

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

Completed by Mrs G Ball
Early Years Leader and Senior Leader at Village