

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

William Lilley Infant & Nursery School

Halls Road

Stapleford

Nottinghamshire NG9 7FS



Governors' Committee Responsible: General Purposes

Policy Originator: Helen Jeffery EYFS Lead

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Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That each child has a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations to become lifelong learners.
- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life. Our high expectations enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and carers.

Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2021). This framework is supported by Development Matters (2021) which is used as a guide to implement our curriculum. Our curriculum is designed and driven by what we want our youngest children to know, experience and be able to do. It aims to enable the children to meet developmental benchmarks throughout the Foundation Stage and ultimately meet the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** areas of learning:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

Physical Development

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

Expressive Arts and Design

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Our EYFS practice is underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Nursery and Reception teachers plan opportunities to practice and embed these key skills. They are also supported by our whole school curriculum drivers and steps to success at William Lilley. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are:

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning

At William Lilley, all areas are delivered through a well-planned, play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level.

Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Our medium-term planning is completed half-termly which identifies the intended learning for children working towards developmental benchmarks. This is a collaborative approach across Nursery and Reception to ensure continuity and a progression of skills. EYFS teachers work together to plan the precise knowledge, skills and vocabulary for each half term.

Children's next steps inform short term, weekly planning for both groups and individuals. Learning each week is underpinned by a high quality key text. Opportunities for children to practise and embed key learning are carefully planned within our continuous provision and enhancement planning.

Teaching

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from hands on, practical activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. Therefore, we have environments that provide continuous provision. Each learning area has cross-curricular resources, which children can access independently throughout the day. The classroom and outdoor areas are also set up with areas of learning, offering continuous provision to build upon and deepen experiences and embed learning. Children are encouraged to be active in their play, pursue their own interests, be creative, take risks, solve problems and develop their social skills. Play gives our children the opportunity to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Children are able to practice skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace.

Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling and questioning. They teach and extend play whilst developing skills and language. Adults respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. There may be times when adults direct children to engage in a focused activity during continuous provision which a specific skill or objective in mind. Adults in Reception achieve this through their Objective Led Planning.

We understand that outdoor play is of equal importance as indoor play and that the outdoor classroom offers children 'bigger', 'louder' and 'messier' experiences. We therefore aim to offer free flow access to our outdoor learning areas throughout the school day.

Alongside our continuous provision, adults carefully plan and deliver focus inputs in both Nursery and Reception. These inputs are 'short bursts' of directed teaching time and focus on number, phonics, topic, singing and circle times. Adults deliver a high quality story time to children every day. The teaching inputs are no longer than 10 minutes in Nursery and build up to no longer than 30 minutes in Reception. We ensure that there is a balance between adult led and child-initiated activities.

Environments

We recognise that the environment plays an essential role in supporting and extending the children's development and view the environment as the third teacher. The use of space encourages encounters, communication and relationships. We aim to make our environment calm, relaxed, natural and inspired by nature, a place where children feel confident and challenged. Both indoors and outdoors are carefully organised to capture children's interests and engage them in opportunities to gain skills and knowledge across a wide range of areas. The environment is organised to enable children to follow their own interests and fascinations, supported by adults when appropriate.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of our everyday practice in the early years. It is an essential and important process that allows adults to develop a good understanding of what children know and understand as well as direct us in how to support children in order to move their learning on.

All staff prioritise getting to know our children very well and we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children.

We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's progress and achievements. These help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child has a 'Learning Journey' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work. Nursery and Reception Teams meet weekly to discuss individual children's attainment with a specific area of learning in mind. Staff discuss whether a child is working within Age Related Expectations, using their own knowledge and focused observations from the previous week. This is recorded on our EYFS Pupil Tracking sheets.

Adults in Nursery and Reception, carry out accurate baseline assessments on entry. Within the first six weeks of starting Reception, teachers administer a statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) as directed by the government. (September 2021) Teachers use our school baseline expectations as a benchmark to make a best fit judgement as to whether a child is working within Age Related Expectations in all areas of learning. These expectations are supported by the EYFS curriculum (2021), expectations outlined within Development Matters (2021) and our professional understanding of typical child development. Baseline information is used as a measure for progress and also helps to identify children's needs and next steps in learning. It can also highlight areas to prioritise for the whole cohort of children. Judgements are based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play and parent's views on their child as a learner will be taken into account.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the Foundation Stage Profile, the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as working within or below 'age related expectations' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum.(2021)

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore we encourage parents to support their child's education from the very start of their school journey. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. We offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child's learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child's learning with the teachers.

In the early years, all parents are invited to trips, listen to children read and come along to our parent help days and half-termly curriculum celebration events. In Reception, parents are encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple home learning activities and joining assemblies. Dojo is used as platform to communicate regularly with parents and carers. Class pages are updated weekly to share 'wow' moments and photos of our learning journey.

At William Lilley, we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. Parents are greatly encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey by adding any achievements and successes at home.

At the end of the school year, teachers write a report for parents. They are an opportunity for all to celebrate the children's progress and achievements and to share areas for further development. At the end of nursery and Reception, parents receive information about their child's assessment. Formal parents meeting are offered in the autumn and spring term, where parents have the opportunity of speaking with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and development, their next steps in learning and to view their child's learning journeys. Parents are always welcomed to discuss their children informally at the end of the school day.

Inclusion

At William Lilley, we recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

In the foundation stage 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 and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential.

We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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.

We provide our children with:

- A wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- A safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is identified, we liaise with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the EAL support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will most benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is targeted in specific areas as the child develops.

Transitions

We recognise that starting a new setting can be an unsettling time for both children and parents. We strive to establish strong procedures for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of change.

Both Nursery and Reception teachers hold a meeting in the summer term before the children start their new setting to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. In Nursery, all parents are offered a home visit prior to their child starting school and in Reception all children who did not attend our school nursery are also visited at their pre school setting. This gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

On entry, new Nursery and Reception children are given staggered entry times to ensure children are settled, nurtured and supported in exploring their new environment.

Throughout the year, opportunities are built into the curriculum for children to collaborate across the Early Years foundation stage. These include theme days and shared activities. Further opportunities are provided to promote the collaboration and networking across the whole school, ensuring children across the whole school develop a sense of community and this supports their end-of-year transition.

In the summer term, Reception children have the opportunity to meet with their Year One teachers in their classrooms, to help them prepare for their new experiences.

Teachers have the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end of year assessment data, with their next class teacher to ensure that all teachers have a well-rounded picture of the children prior to the new school year.

Children with Special Educational Needs have more frequent informal visits and are provided with a transition book including photographs and information about their new class.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The Head teacher and EYFS Leader work collaboratively to monitor provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the SLT and the EYFS team as appropriate, and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults within EYFS have a key responsibility for children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of appraisal targets.

We ensure that we keep abreast of developments within EYFS through engagement with external support through the local Teaching School Alliance network and Local Authority network alongside work completed within our formal collaboration.

Governors monitor developments within the Early Years foundation stage. There is a key Governor responsible for the Communication Heroes driver which includes EYFS, reading, phonics and communication. This governor has a termly meeting with the EYFS lead to review the action plan.

