

Walton CEVC Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the area of education upon which young children build the rest of their lives. It is a single framework for care, learning and development. All learners should be given the opportunity to experience the best possible start to their education to develop solid foundations which will ensure that they flourish throughout their school years and on into adulthood.

The 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' refers to children from Birth to the end of Reception class. It sets out a series of Early Learning Goals for children to work towards by the time they reach the end of EYFS at the age of 5. For young children there is no distinction between work and play. Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In EYFS we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions that differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and

understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.

- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). The four themes of the EYFS underpin all the guidance. These being 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Learning and Development'.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

The prime areas of learning and development are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

Active Learning through Play

We organise the day to provide a balance between the following:-

- Child initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning.
- Adult Initiated Activities- practitioners provide the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning.
- Adult Directed Activities – Children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes.

At Walton Primary we understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework.

Assessment and Record Keeping

On entry data is taken from all pre-school transfer forms and completed on an on entry grid. The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012). At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated and adult directed activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year.

Medium term planning is created and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors and outdoors. Depending on numbers, our Early Years children can be entering a teaching environment that includes Year 1. Our Class 1 curriculum is planned over a two year rolling programme and

provides a whole environment approach from which early years children will gather learning experiences.

Parents as Partners

At Walton Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. We encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. We also encourage parents to complete WOW sheets where they write down significant learning experiences. Whole school newsletters are also sent home on a half termly basis. Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into school. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Class 1 has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

Admissions and Induction

Walton Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. Before they start in the school, all children are offered a series of 'come and play' sessions during the summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. The Early Years Teacher will also go to visit the children in their current pre-school settings where possible. The aim of these visits is to support the teacher to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Walton Primary School as smooth as possible. In the summer term parents are invited into school to meet the teacher.

At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the school is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. Information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. Induction packs for children to complete with parents will also be given out as another way to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of each individual child.

From September children attend the school part-time in small groups mornings or afternoons only. Then they all stay for mornings and lunches, and then full-time. There may be individual cases where both the staff and parents feel it would benefit the child to remain part-time for a little longer. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

Policy Approved: February 2019
Date of next Review: February 2021