



# **Heaton St. Barnabas' CE (VA) Primary School**

**Policy For**

# **Early Years Foundation Stage**

**This policy was approved by Curriculum Committee**

**Autumn 2021**

**This policy will be reviewed in Summer 2023**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

### **September 2021**

#### **There are four main purposes to this policy:**

- To establish an entitlement for all children in the EYFS with equality of opportunity;
- To establish expectations for all staff working with children in the EYFS to ensure quality and consistency;
- To state the school's approaches to the EYFS curriculum in order to promote parents' and carers' understanding of the curriculum;
- To promote continuity and coherence across the EYFS.

#### **Introduction**

##### **The importance of the Foundation Stage**

'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.'

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years' providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.'

**(Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, September 2021).**

#### **Expectations**

During the first six weeks of school, children will undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which is a short interactive assessment to determine their starting point on entry to school. This assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication, language and will be compared to KS2 outcomes in order to measure progress throughout school.

For most children, the end of the reception year will be the end of the Foundation Stage, when the expectation is that children's attainment is measured against the 17 early learning goals (ELGs). Throughout reception, children will be provided with experiences which will support them in reaching these goals at the appropriate time to them. Children are defined as having reached a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the EYFS if they have achieved at least the expected level for the ELGs in the prime areas of learning and the specific areas of mathematics and literacy. Those children working beyond the early learning goals will be given appropriate and sufficient challenge to support, extend and enrich their learning. A priority will be placed on each individual child's unique needs, interest and stage of development.

#### **The aims of the EYFS curriculum and how these contribute to the school's aims**

The school aims to ensure that the curriculum for the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

These areas will be strengthened and applied through:

- Literacy (comprehension, word reading and writing)
- Mathematics (number and numerical patterns)
- Understanding the world (Past and present, people, culture and communities and the natural world)
- Expressive arts and design (Being imaginative and expressive, and creating with materials)

## Strategy for implementation

### Entitlement and curriculum provision

Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing decision to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help the children prepare for more formal learning in Year 1. Our ultimate aim is to help and guide the children to become independent, enquiring and evaluative learners. Through the use of topics and our 'question tree' we follow children's interests in order to fully engage them in taking charge of their own learning.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, September 2021).

### Learning and teaching

Children participate in whole class, small group and individual activities. These times increase as the year progresses in order to accommodate children's individual needs and to stretch their learning. Children also participate in daily phonics, reading, writing and mathematics sessions. RE, topic, music and PSHE are also shared with the children weekly. At all times, the characteristics of effective learning (playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically) are considered in our planning and teaching in order to meet each child's individual needs.

In order to promote effective learning, the teaching will provide opportunities and experiences for children to:

- have access to a wide range of opportunities and experiences which will allow them to explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their knowledge, skills and understanding;
- initiate activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from one another;
- have time to explore ideas and follow their interests in depth;
- feel confident in order to become independent learners;
- make links to other areas of their learning;
- undertake creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

The staff will:

- work in partnership with parents and carers;
- promote children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable;
- teach specific skills and knowledge;

- understand that children learn in different ways and at a different pace to each other;
- use rich and varied language to help children develop linguistic structures for thinking;
- plan both indoor and outdoor provision to maximise opportunities for children's learning.

## **Inclusion**

Planning will meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups including Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers and children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

It is the school's intention to provide:

- a safe, secure learning environment in which all children are valued;
- a wide range of opportunities to motivate support and develop;
- planned opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge.

For those children with special educational needs, the focus will be on removing barriers to learning for children. Children's learning difficulties will be identified at an early stage and teaching will respond quickly to areas of difficulty. This will involve working closely with parents and developing an effective strategy to meet these needs. This may involve working with staff from other agencies in drawing up Provision maps and My Support plans.

## **Organisation**

The learning environment both inside and out will be planned effectively to meet the requirements of all areas of learning. It will be well organised into clearly-defined areas.

The areas will include:

- an attractive and comfortable place to read and explore books;
- sand, both dry and wet with a variety of equipment;
- water with equipment;
- mathematical and scientific equipment, including discrete maths opportunities across the unit;
- a writing area with a variety of media and tools to mark, make or write;
- imaginative play area;
- a variety of creative media;
- junk and box modelling;
- malleable area including playdough, clay, messy play;
- baking materials and equipment;
- collections of interesting objects to handle such as loose parts and natural materials;
- a variety of outdoor play equipment.

All areas will be attractive and suitably resourced so that children are encouraged to use them and engage in purposeful, challenging activities with or without the presence of an adult.

Resources will be organised in such a way that children are able to make informed choices, select independently what they need and take responsibility for clearing away once used.

## **Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's learning in order to help make future plans and provide for children effectively. We record observations in a variety of ways, namely through the use of the 'Tapestry' app and all observations are recorded in children's individual online learning journeys. Within the summer term a report for parents is provided with a commentary on children's attainment, progress and characteristics of learning. We encourage all parties to contribute to discussions, assessment and children's learning journeys. Parents

are encouraged to upload any significant 'learning moments' from outside of school, in the form of photos, pictures and comments. Assessment opportunities will be identified in planning and provided for:

- skilful and well planned observations of children;
- working in partnership with parents;
- evaluating the quality of provision and practitioners' training needs;
- ensuring the baseline assessment is informed by observation, discussion and evaluation and in line with policy.

### **Leadership and management**

The role of the EYFS leader will be to identify any priorities relating to the EYFS and identify these in the school improvement plan as appropriate. Relevant staff training and development needs will be outlined and guidance given to all staff in order to support them. The EYFS lead will also keep up to date with new developments and resources, in order to help review and monitor teaching and learning in EYFS.

It is expected that all staff and governors are aware of the requirements of the Foundation Stage and the importance of this key stage in relation to the children's learning. The impact on raising standards across the school is also a priority, especially with the implementation of the new Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

### **Learning Outdoors**

Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that the outdoor learning environment contributes to all areas of learning and supports the indoor provision.

Children should have access to the total learning environment in and out for a substantial part of each session. All children will be encouraged to take part in the full range of outdoor experiences. Resources outdoors and indoors will be organised similarly to enable children to be independent and take responsibility. Planning incorporates outdoor activities for all weathers. The outdoor area supports children's development and achievement, alongside having access to the school garden, forest school and Heaton Woods, when additional adults are available to supervise.

### **Safety**

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure learning environment and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk. We promote a healthy lifestyle by providing fresh fruit for the children daily and encourage them to make independent healthy choices about what they eat. As part of the EYFS reforms (Sep 21), oral hygiene is now an addition to 'promoting the good health of children'. This will be taught through enhanced provision, appropriate activities and the use of visitors such as dentists in the local community.

### **Parents as partners**

We pride ourselves on having outstanding relationships with parents and other parties. We have an 'open door' policy whereby we have daily discussions with parents regarding their children and actively encourage parents to take part in their child's learning experiences. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to support children broaden their horizons.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned to ensure we meet the needs of each individual child. During the summer term, visits to nurseries for our new starters are completed and they are also invited into school for two separate transition afternoons, both with and without parents. Following this, half day sessions at school are provided over the first few weeks in order to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. We have an excellent working

relationship with all our feeder nurseries and regularly share information to best inform a smooth transition for all our children.

Review date: SUMMER 2023