



THE ABBEY CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Policy

Date policy revised: July 2023

Date to be reviewed: July 2027

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school all children join us on a staggered introduction at the beginning of the school year. They have up to one week in school until 12pm and a subsequent week until 1pm, before full time schooling begins to ease the transition.

At the Abbey CE VA Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to inspire the children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at the Abbey CE VA Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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 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 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 phase
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

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. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

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.

At the Abbey CE VA Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At the Abbey CE VA Primary School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We have good links with a variety of feeder nurseries where visits are undertaken by the EYFS teacher. The EYFS teacher/EYP meets with as many nursery schools as possible to discuss new intake children.

We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- providing detailed welcome pack to new parents and asking parents to complete detailed paperwork on their child before school begins
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher, in the classroom, with their parents before starting school during visits to the classroom. This also includes lunch in our dining hall and a lunchtime play in the Infant playground.
- Inviting all parents to two induction meetings/sessions during the term before their child starts school.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class and allowing free access to the children's observation books.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents in the first two terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Arranging activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: maths mornings, nativity plays and singing concerts, Sports Day etc.
- Encouraging parents to contribute observations and 'wow moments' in the children's Building Books.
- Encouraging parents to make comments in their child's reading diary and hearing their child read.
- Holding autumn term curriculum meetings for parents, issuing termly curriculum letters and vocabulary lists to parents.
- Holding termly consultations in autumn and spring and a more informal summer term opportunity following the annual report.

Transition into Early Years

In order to make the transition into Abbey School as smooth and easy as possible, we invite new parents and their children to join us for two introductory sessions during the second half of the Summer Term before they start school. This gives the children an opportunity to meet the Reception class teacher, whilst becoming familiar with the Reception classroom. One of the visits includes a lunch session in school.

When Reception start school in September we provide a staggered entry to build on their confidence and enable them to tackle new opportunities as they arrive, so initially it will be to familiarise them with their actual setting – toilet routines, putting on their coats and plimsolls etc.

In the first week of school Reception children attend from 8.55-12pm. In the second week we help the children to become independent with their lunch routine – choosing their food, carrying their trays and eating their food! The children therefore attend from 8.55-1pm. By the third week we then feel that the children are fully prepared to start school full-time and know the routines and expectations.

We also believe that by providing the children with a steadier start to school it cuts down on illnesses like colds and tummy bugs because they are less tired and susceptible to picking things up. If your child suffers with sickness and diarrhoea, they must be 48 hours clear before returning to school.

Special Friends

Every Reception child is allocated a Year 6 “Special Friend” to ease their transition into school life. The “Special Friend” will assist a Reception child during break times and lunchtimes in the first few weeks of school. As Reception settle in, the “Special Friends” input reduces, although they will continue to enjoy some joint activities throughout the academic year.

We encourage the Year 6 “Special Friend” to write to their allocated child in July to introduce themselves, and this letter will include a photograph to help the family recognise the eager Year 6 child, who aims to be a role model and a friend to Reception in their first year of school. This is a privilege that our year 6 children look forward to and Reception parents and children really appreciate.

A special Welcome Assembly is held near the beginning of the Autumn term to welcome new children and their families to the school. The Year 6 ‘special friends’ bring the new children to the front of the hall in turn to be introduced to the school.

Enabling Environments

At the Abbey CE VA Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS starts with the Long Term Provision Plan, which will then be fed into a more detailed Medium Term Plan linked to the ELG. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these MTP’s in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual Building Books and on individual assessment sheets.

At the Abbey CE VA Primary School, we use an assessment tracker called Assessment Manager 7 to record judgements against the EYFS (Early Learning Goals) Profile each term. Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from the ELG's.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. There is an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

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 and rest. The classroom is organized to create an independent working space, where the children are able to find and locate equipment and resources as they require them.

The EYFS class has its own enclosed outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for learning in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning. We also make full use of our physical environment to support the teaching and learning.

Learning and Development

At the Abbey CE VA Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding The World
- Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult guided and

child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features 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 carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout 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, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Play

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

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

Transition into Year 1

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible. The EYFS Profile results and a copy of the report are discussed and passed on to the Year 1 teacher. Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children and their next targets in July. Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for an hour session in July. The Year 1 teacher makes informal visits to the Reception class to get to know the children in the last few weeks of the Summer term. In the summer term of Reception the teacher, with the Year 1 teacher moderate the children's scores and in the following summer term again work together to set challenging targets for the end of Year 1.

The same levels of independence that have been developed throughout the Reception year are expected to continue as children move up into Year 1. Reception practitioners plan for slightly more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term to encourage less dependence on adult support. In the first term in Year 1 the teachers plan with the FS Early Learning Goals in mind, working towards Year 1 National Curriculum expectations toward the end of the first term.

Year 1 has provision for planning and Child Initiated learning throughout the year with longer working sessions planned in the first term. The Year 1 classroom is set up in a similar way to the Reception setting with resources that are accessible in the same way, to continue to promote independent learning. The Year 1 teacher meets with parents early on in the Autumn term in the Curriculum meeting to explain the transition from Reception to Year 1 and answer any concerns.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and subject co-ordinators will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.