



## **Theale Church of England Primary School**

### **Foundation Stage Policy**

“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 it’s own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Theale C of E Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and as preparation for life.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age.

All children enter our Foundation Stage with a variety of experiences and have already learnt a great deal. It is essential that the all those working in our Nursery (F1) and Reception (F2) classes build upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and the early years teachers work together effectively to support children’s learning and development. This is achieved by the sharing of information with preschools and parents/carers and ensuring that each child’s learning in a continuous journey.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile**

#### **Principles**

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child - every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and well-being.
- Positive Relationships – every child can learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a significant adult. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of significant adults.
- Enabling Environments – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning, support for every child, the learning environment and the wider context –transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

## **Aims**

We aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and experience
- provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive and challenging

## **Learning and Development**

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning: Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal Social and Emotional Development. Additionally there are four specific areas of learning: Literacy, Maths, Understanding The World and Expressive Art and Design. The prime and specific areas of learning are achieved by playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically.

## **Planning**

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do.

Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All staff are involved in this process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

### **• Long Term Planning**

We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to give a broad and balanced coverage.

### **• Medium Term Planning**

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT.

Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

### **• Short Term Planning**

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

We work as part of the Early Years team and within the policies of the whole school and the children benefit from being part of the whole school community in terms of daily routines, provision of activities and opportunities, and access to working with a range of adults. We are supported by our SEN coordinator and we also receive support from outside agencies to support individual needs and make the learning experience relevant for all.

## **Assessment, recording and monitoring**

Formative assessment starts with an entry profile which is completed with the parent /carer and which forms the starting point of the Learning Journey which we complete for each child throughout their time in the EYFS.

By analysing and reviewing what we know about each child's development and learning, we can make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Formative assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents via post it notes or verbal communication on a daily basis.

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against thirteen scales. This is recorded on the E profile which summarises children's progress towards the Early learning goals. . All practitioners in the Foundation Stage contribute to the information in the profile and the teacher attends the local cluster group moderation to verify the judgements being made.

The EYFS teachers monitor teaching and learning across the Foundation stage each year and analyse EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the headteacher.

## **Learning through play**

*"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."*

("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

We do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and through sustained shared thinking.

## **The Learning Environment**

*"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces."*

("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas:

Small world and real world role play, book corner, writing area, maths activities and challenges, listening area, computer area, creative area, manipulative area, sand, water, growing, garden, digging area, climbing area, bike area, music, construction, puzzles and space for physical activities. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

## **Liaison with pre-school settings, induction and home school links**

We have developed good links with our neighbouring preschool and day Nursery and Learning Journeys and other documentation from all previous settings is used for our entry assessments. Prospective parents can visit the school at any time and the school organises "Transition days for all new pupils". Meetings with parents on these days ensure that all relevant documents and

information are given out and that parents are informed about school life and how the children will be working in the EYFS. We also offer a session to train parents/carers on how to work with our Read Write Inc. phonics programme and how to support early reading.

We recognise the fundamental truth that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When we work together the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the curriculum to parents/carers to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- encouraging parents/carers to pass on information for the child's Learning Journey
- displaying our planning in each classroom
- holding parent/carer evenings to discuss progress and next steps for learning
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- inviting parents/carers to help in our school and to accompany children on school visits and fun events
- encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- through providing activities to support the curriculum at home and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the EYFS assessment scales

### **Equal Opportunities**

We aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

### **Inclusion**

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.