

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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St Werburgh's Primary School

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**Version Control Sheet**

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## **Introduction**

*“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 its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”* Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage(EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At St Werburgh’s Primary School children are admitted to reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At St Werburgh’s Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

We also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life, and that it is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. We believe that children are born with a natural desire to explore and learn and the Reception team will support children in this by creating an enabling environment which is built on secure and trusting relationships.

We recognise that our children begin school with a wide range of knowledge, experience and skills. We aim to draw upon these and to further develop learning from the children’s individual starting points. This process is supported through making and maintaining strong partnerships with our parents/carers and with our main feeder Nursery school. The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child – developing capable, confident, resilient and self-assured individuals.
- Positive Relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling Environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and Developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

## **A Unique Child**

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be capable, confident, resilient and self-assured. Children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, and our ELLI animals to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

## **Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEND)**

All children and their families are valued at St Werburgh's Primary School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential SEND is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of SEND is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at the earliest appropriate stage and the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO) is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the School's SEND Policy.

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 language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Positive Relationships
- At St Werburgh's Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Welfare**

It is important to us that all children in St Werburgh's Primary School are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits so that they can judge risk and appropriateness of their own and others behaviour independently. 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 CST Child Protection Policy for further details)

*"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." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)*

At St Werburgh's Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. All staff undertake annual training on safeguarding. We understand, and are committed to, the requirements to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding 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 all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their individual needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the School and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Positive Relationships**

At St Werburgh's Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents/parental figures 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 ongoing role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before he/she starts in our school in their home setting.
- Inviting all parents to meetings during the term before their child starts school and again during the first two terms of the child's Reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Running workshops which detail how we teach early reading and writing and how parents can best support at home.
- Providing parents/carers with reports on their children's attainment and progress formally 3 times a year (6 times a year for Pupil Premium children).
- Arranging activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents, such as: play days, celebration assemblies, mystery readers, school visits and inviting parents to share children's learning in our fantastic finales.

- Providing parents with an opportunity to celebrate their children’s learning and development by being able to contribute to their learning diaries.
- Inviting parents to support learning and the School’s curriculum by bringing their own knowledge and experience to our school.

Furthermore, each week we will choose “focus children” from each class and these children will be observed more closely for the whole of the following week. We will all be aware of these children and they will begin the week by talking about themselves and any significant things happening in their life. Parents email the class teachers photos of anything significant to them, their interests and what they will be happy to share with their peers. As the week goes on, practitioners will observe interests, extend on these and support children to progress, showing them and encouraging them and watching them achieve. At the end of the focus week, a learning journey will be produced and appointments will be made to meet with parents during the following week.

### **Supporting Transition**

We recognise that starting school can be hard for some children and that some children will only just have turned 4 years old when they come to the School. We aim to support a smooth transition from home or nursery to school as best we can and as flexibly as possible, offering extended part-time timetables for those children who need this, and starting from each child’s stage not age. Some of the ways in which we support this transition are by:

- Ensuring that children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions.
- Ensuring that the children feel welcomed into our setting through having pegs ready for all children with a photo of them in their home setting clearly displayed and having resources available which reflect their interests (as shared by parents in the transition pack and through home visits).
- Supporting children through the transition from Nursery to Reception with a part-time timetable initially, which builds up during the first three weeks of term in September.

### **Enabling Environments**

We very much believe in the Emilio Reggio concept of the learning environment being the ‘Third Teacher’ and place high importance on it being as attractive as possible, with high quality resources provided for stimulation and interest. It is a place where all children should feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up with planned continuous provision and stimulating resources which provide rich learning opportunities through play.

Our learning environment is decorated in neutral colours, and natural materials are used as much as possible so that it is calming and easy for children to navigate. Displays are backed with neutral colours so that it is the children’s work that stands out, and all children are celebrated in their own classrooms with their photographs and work being shared.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following a child's interests. As well as using formative assessment, we also conduct a Gap and Strength Analysis, which uses key data headlines to inform our planning and provision.

### **Learning and Development**

Teachers and teaching assistants provide the curriculum in the two reception classes, which are made up of a maximum of 28 children each.

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are 'prime areas,' and four are 'specific areas.'

The 'prime areas' are:

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

The 'specific areas' are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the world
- Expressive arts and design

When a child starts in Reception, the main priority is to ensure that the child's wellbeing and engagement are high. When this is the case, baseline assessment is used to establish where each child is with their development and learning so that this can be built on throughout Reception and beyond. The assessment is carried out in a very informal way through play-based activities which are set up as part of the continuous provision, and the children should not know that they are being assessed at all.

During their day at school, the children will participate in whole-class adult-directed teaching of Literacy and Maths, and have the opportunity to embed and secure these skills during independent learning through play. An extended part of their day will be learning "in the moment" as they explore and play. We will be observing carefully and enhancing the learning whenever we spot a "teachable moment". Our observations, interactions and the outcomes will be documented in their learning journals as a record of their progress, achievements and next steps.

At St Werburgh's Primary School:

*"Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part of 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 on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners 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 children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.”* (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

### **Characteristics of effective learning**

The ways in which children engage with other people and their environment underpins learning and development across all areas and enables them to remain effective and motivated learners. These are known as the characteristics of effective learning, and they transcend all areas of their learning. They are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying, even 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.

*“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”* (Statutory framework for the EYFS 2021)

### **Equal Opportunities**

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

### **Health and Safety**

At St Werburgh’s Primary School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk, including procedures for keeping children safe during outings, and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require further risk assessment. In addition to this, an annual risk assessment is conducted of the EYFS, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies. The EYFS risk assessment should be read in conjunction with other relevant whole school policies (see EYFS risk assessment).

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2021, at St Werburgh’s Primary School we undertake to:

- Adopt a whole-school approach to the administration of medicines ensuring that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child’s needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines will only be administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child’s parent/carer.

- Ensure that fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Record and act upon, when required, a child's dietary needs.
- Provide space for independent daily access to a healthy snack and drink within Reception.
- Ensure access to a first aid box at all times and to keep a record of all accidents and injuries (see First Aid Policy).
- Maintain and follow a robust fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.
- Abide by the Safeguarding and code of conduct documents that are in place. These include guidance on how mobile phones and cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the school. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff's own personal use.

### **Assessment**

Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Children are assessed against the early learning goals (ELG). It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share. Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their children's progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals. Assessment should inform an ongoing dialogue between practitioners and Year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment taken in the first six weeks, in which a child starts Reception. In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile must reflect practitioners' own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to inform discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of all those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole-school monitoring schedule. This policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** or as necessary.

Originally written November 2018  
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