

Appleton Wiske Community Primary School
EYFS Policy

Intent

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support that enables them to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A safe, secure, healthy 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. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents/carers, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their care. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates. At our school, we will:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of every child, including children with additional needs
- Provide a deep, rich, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- Enrich the development of talk and language linked to all areas of learning by sharing a wide range of vocabulary
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and creatively
- Respond to children's own interests, supporting and challenging them with a flexible learning approach
- 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/carers and value their contributions irrespective of background
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child**
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 as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive relationships**
We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments with teaching support from adults**
We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Learning and development**
The Early Years environment 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 and outdoor space are set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Adults move children forward in all areas of their learning and development through questioning, language opportunities, modelling, interactions and challenges. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives.

Implementation

We follow the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage – effective from September 2021*. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape learning in EYFS. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

There are **three prime areas** of learning:

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

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is developed through the **characteristics of effective learning**:

- 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

- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

We strive to develop these key characteristics in order to give our pupils the skills that they will continue to draw upon throughout their development. We get to know our families and pupils well and use their interests and knowledge to support and inspire their understanding of themselves and their emotions, our local community and beyond. Our learning environments, both inside and outside, are adapted to meet the different and developing needs of our pupils. There is a combination of adult supported and child led activities throughout the day, and we are guided by our pupils and their needs. Whilst our curriculum is planned and sequenced, we are flexible and adaptable in order to respond to our pupils' developmental needs. We provide our pupils with a safe, stimulating environment that allows them to discover, be challenged, consolidate their learning and achieve their very best whilst development resilience, independence and emotional security. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are 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 needs. All members of staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process. Planning within EYFS is based around the children's interests and school themes. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning and may be altered in response to the needs of the children. To support planning, we share ideas from the non-statutory guidance for Reception children in Development Matters alongside our own expertise and knowledge specific to our own children.

Assessment:

Assessment plays an important part in informing us about our pupils' progress so that we understand their needs and can plan activities with the necessary support. Throughout the year, pupils are assessed formally and informally in order to monitor their strengths and emerging learning and development needs and interests. We make regular assessments of pupils' learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in EYFS takes the form of recorded observations (through the use of 'Evidence Me') and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are used to inform future planning. In our interactions with children, we respond to day-to-day observations about their progress and observations that parents and carers share. During the summer term in Reception, the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed and each child's level of development is assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals. We evaluate whether children are meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels of development (emerging). The EYFS Profile provides a well-rounded picture of each child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. At the end of the EYFS year, we report to parents on their children's achievements in Characteristics of Effective Learning as well as the Early Learning Goals.

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment is administered in the first six weeks of the Reception year and this assesses pupils' early mathematics, literacy, communication and language. The sole purpose of the RBA is for comparison with Key Stage 2 outcomes 7 years later and is not used by the school for any other reason.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

Home and School Links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents/carers to work closely together. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge. We develop this working relationship between home and school as follows:

- During the Summer Term, prior to starting school the following September, children visit school for morning sessions and lunches in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the foundation stage environment. Throughout the year, teachers visit the preschool setting in Appleton Wiske as part of the transition process. Pre-school and school also organise additional activity sessions together. A meeting for the parents/carers of new starters takes place in the summer term.
- We host two formal parent consultations and provide two written reports. The first parent consultation establishes how a child is settling into the school environment. The summer term report includes formal end of year results.
- We share 'learning journeys' where a child's learning experiences are recorded. These form an integral part of speaking and listening and development of language as the children share these with their peers, answering questions about activities from home.
- We operate an open door policy that allows parents/carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. If staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will approach parents/carers to discuss them.
- We provide information sessions for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school in order to make it easier to emulate them at home.

Impact

Our EYFS curriculum is deep, rich and sufficiently challenging. The content, sequencing and progression of the curriculum are carefully considered and appropriate to the needs of our pupils. As a result, pupils are happy, motivated and keen to participate in their learning. They learn effectively through playing and exploring, learning through doing and thinking creatively. Pupils access all areas of the learning environment (indoors and outdoors) which enhances their development. They develop knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning in an age-appropriate way. Our EYFS curriculum provides pupils for Key Stage 1 and beyond.

*Recent reforms of the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has been reformed and there is a new EYFS framework that all schools and settings are required to follow from September 2021. These national changes have been made to better support all pupils' learning and development. It is also the aim that the new framework will better prepare pupils for the transition into Key Stage 1. There are some elements of the EYFS that have not significantly changed and some that have. Below are some of the key points from the new EYFS reforms that include relevant changes:

- Early Years staff will be spending less time on large amounts of written observations and assessments for evidence collection. This means they can spend more time supporting and engaging with the children and their learning and development needs.
- Pupils will no longer be assessed against statements from an age band category. Instead, staff will use their experience and knowledge to monitor if a child's learning and development is on track for their age.
- The early learning goals at the end of reception have been changed to become more clear and easier to understand. Staff will use their judgements to assess if the children have met these goals at the end of the EYFS and inform parents/carers.
- There is an emphasis on improving pupils' language and vocabulary through increasing opportunities for conversations, reading of a wide range of books and holding discussions around activities in other areas of learning.
- EYFS Literacy and mathematics knowledge has been adapted to better match up with the National Curriculum that starts in Year 1.
- There is no longer an exceeding judgement at the end of Reception. Pupils will instead be challenged to have a greater depth and understanding of ideas.
- Safeguarding and welfare of pupils is still of upmost priority, with a greater emphasis on the importance of good oral health and how to keep teeth clean and healthy.

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