

South Ascot Village School



Early Years Policy

Date policy last reviewed: September 2022

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher Date: _____

_____ Chair of governors Date: _____

Next scheduled policy review
date: September 2024

Introduction

'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'.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years foundation Stage, March 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At **South Ascot Village 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 **South Ascot Village School** we greatly value the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and a child's preparation for life.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At **South Ascot Village School**, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.
- The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:
 - It builds on what our children already know and can do;
 - It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
 - It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
 - It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
 - It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

Background to the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

1. A Unique Child

At **South Ascot Village 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, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

We work closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met so they can access the curriculum and make good progress.

2. Positive Relationships

At **South Ascot Village School** we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we value working with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open afternoons and induction meetings.
- Providing a starter information pack about commencing The Foundation Stage at **South Ascot Village School**.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Ensuring that parents/carers are able to discuss any queries or concerns, either face to face or by telephone.
- Written contact through the school newsletters.
- Publishing a half-term overview detailing the areas of learning.
- Sharing the children's 'Learning Journey' with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation Stage.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such open afternoons, Christmas productions and sports day.

All staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

3. Enabling Environments

At **South Ascot Village School** we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

4. Learning and Development

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational provision in the early years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the Early Learning Goals at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

- 1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- 2. Communication and Language**
- 3. Physical Development**

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- 1. Literacy**
- 2. Mathematics**
- 3. Understanding the world**
- 4. Expressive arts and design**

Children's development levels are assessed and as time progresses in Foundation, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Children in the Foundation Stage also participate in a daily phonics session, using the Read Write Inc phonics programme.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring – children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.

‘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.’

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, 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 – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

‘Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.’

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

Creating and thinking critically – we encourage and support children to 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.”

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

These Characteristics of effective learning are also embodied and emphasised further in the whole school's adoption of the concept of learning powers that are represented in the form of a corresponding creature and attributes.

Planning

Teaching staff consider the needs, interests and development of each child in order to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences in all areas of the EYFS framework. With the help of non-statutory guidance 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to 5 Matters', children work towards achieving a set of Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception year. These goals, defined in the Statutory Framework, support teachers to make holistic judgements about children's development and their transition to year 1.

The planning is based upon themes with discrete directed teaching of phonics, maths and reading. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic and acts as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals.

Observations

Foundation Stage staff are trained to use observations as the basis for planning, observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's online Learning Journeys.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping the school to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support.

Parents will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development, and the EYFS lead will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents.

Ongoing formative assessments will be used to assess the day-to-day learning and development of children in the EYFS. Adults interact and observe children to understand their interests and learning needs, and will use this information to inform practice and provision for each child.

Throughout the year we make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

The school will ensure that teachers actively engage children, their parents and other adults who have significant interaction with specific children in their assessment processes to provide a well-rounded picture of their development and attainment.

The school will ensure that assessment processes do not prevent teachers and practitioners from spending as much time as possible interacting with children and directly supporting their learning and development. Teachers will not be required to record or document evidence to prove children's level of development; however, they may decide to record particularly noteworthy achievements in order to plan teaching and where this is beneficial for building knowledge of children.

The EYFS lead will discuss any cause for concern in a child's progress with the child's parents, especially where this concern relates to the prime areas of learning. A strategy of support will be agreed upon and consideration will be taken as to whether the child may have SEND which requires additional support.

The school will take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children with EAL to use their home language in play and learning whilst also ensuring that these children have sufficient opportunities to reach a good standard of English. During assessment, if it is found that a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, the EYFS lead will contact the child's parents to establish their home language skills to establish whether there is cause for concern about a language delay.

The school will undertake a summative assessment of the level of each child's development at certain stages during the EYFS. These are:

- Reception Baseline Assessment – a short, statutory assessment which is taken within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception year. The RBA is designed to check early literacy, communication, language and maths skills. The sole purpose of the RBA is to form the starting point for cohort-level school progress measures. Data from the RBA is compared to key stage 2 outcomes 7 years later to form the overall progress measures of a school.
- The EYFS Profile – a comprehensive statutory assessment completed at the end of the EYFS to provide a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against the early learning goals (ELGs), and their readiness for Year 1. We record each child's level of development, in the Summer term against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging or Expected using a 'best fit' criterium.

At the end of the final term in the Foundation Stage Parents and carers receive the EYFSP judgements along with their child's end of year report. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead.

The school will report EYFS Profile results to the LA when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department.

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas that offer a range of different experiences that allow them to engage, explore and investigate. Children have access to both inside and outside area across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development.

Teaching & Learning Styles

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined **in our policy on teaching and learning**. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Parents of all children starting in Foundation will be invited to an induction meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and to get an overview of the school.

Starting Foundation Stage

Children starting Reception are given an opportunity to come in to school in the summer term before starting to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. Parents get a chance to meet the teacher to get more information about the curriculum, routines and general housekeeping, as well as asking questions directly.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding & 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.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

At **South Ascot Village School**, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021, namely to:

- Provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- 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 setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid

hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children, which is covered in more detail in the school's Safeguarding policies.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in the Foundation Stage to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head teacher and EYFS lead will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Governing Body will also be part of this process.