



Early Years Curriculum Policy

Respect - Excellence - Friendship

School values

**Respect, Excellence, Friendship.
Determination, Inspiration, Courage and Equality**

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extends from the age of 0 - 5 years.

At Stowford School we have a single point entry to the foundation classes, which is at the beginning of the school year. Children can start nursery when they are ready in the term in which their third birthday lies.

The EYFS is an important stage in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the EYFS.

The EYFS Learning programme at Stowford is based largely on the premise of providing an environment that is stimulating and exciting to young minds, in an effort for every child to reach their full potential.

In the early years we begin to teach the importance of human virtues as we believe in a balance between academic and personal achievement. We also begin to introduce the school values for Respect, Excellence, Friendship, Determination, Inspiration, Courage and Equality. That is to say, we encourage children to foster their own personal virtues so that they may grow into young adults who are not only successful and motivated in their workplace, but are also of a steadfast character.

The Early Years Inspection Handbook (September 2019) states '*It is the role of the setting to ensure that children experience the awe and wonder of the world in which they live, through the seven areas of learning*'. The early years are so important for building strong foundations that will make a real difference to a child's future. Cultural capital in early years is about giving children the best possible start to their early education and future success preparing children with the knowledge and skills for what comes next. We believe that what children learn in the early years of life will stay with them forever

Purpose and Aims

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.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the characteristics of learning of being engaged and motivated, and for using creative and critical thinking. We endeavour to embed traditional British values in all our work and in children's moral compass.

These outcomes are achieved by:

- **setting the standards** for the learning, development and care young children experience;
- **providing for equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice;
- **creating the framework for partnership** working between our teachers and parents;
- **improving quality and consistency** in our early years setting;
- **laying a secure foundation for future learning** that caters for the individual needs and interests of each child.

We also believe that for our children to feel safe, nurtured, loved and supported we must:

- provide a carefully planned, bright and busy environment in which children can develop skills, attitudes and understanding that will help them to live full satisfying lives and become confident, useful, active members of a diverse constantly-changing society;
- provide opportunities for each child to become a valued member of the school community so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted;
- develop, through appropriate adult support for play, key learning skills such as listening, speaking, concentration, persistence and learning to work together and to co-operate with other children;
- encourage a positive attitude with a disposition to learn, where curiosity, excitement, willingness to 'have a go' and persistence are all equally fostered;
- provide a broad and challenging experience for our children, both indoors and outside;
- develop the intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potential of every child;
- nurture the independent growth of the individual characteristics of each child;
- promote healthy growth through correct nutrition, fresh air and hygiene;
- celebrate success as being the starting point to learning;
- establish a partnership with all parents for the mutual benefit of children, parents and staff;
- establish a partnership with all local feeder pre-schools;
- offer opportunities for each child to 'find out' both verbally and non-verbally, through language, books, equipment, music, visits, meals, visual stimuli, mathematics and play;
- continually assess and evaluate the development of each child by systematic and regular observations.

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following themes:

- A Unique Child;
- Positive Relationships;
- Enabling Environments ;
- Learning and Development.

Daily Routines

In the EYFS, we build on what children have already learned at home and we lay a solid foundation for their future formal education. The environment that we provide is a secure and caring educational one, where they acquire grounding in the fundamentals of learning, and ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged. This is strongly promoted by developing strong ties with parents and encouraging feedback.

In the nursery and foundation stage, we provide a structured timetable which is conducive to effective learning. For part-time nursery children, we ensure that all children take part in structured adult-led sessions on each day they attend to ensure they receive consistency in the sequence of lessons taught. These child-initiated and adult-led activities are reflected in the teacher's planning. We provide a structured timetable which is conducive to effective learning. The children find security and a sense of order in this practice of routine and we are aiming to lay a solid foundation for a formula that increases their chances of achieving a successful and fulfilled life as an adult.

Children at Stowford are provided with a balance between structured free play and involvement in formal, teacher led activities. These child-initiated and adult-led activities are reflected in the teacher's planning. Their choices are carefully monitored and, when necessary, they are guided and redirected. This is to ensure that each child is gaining a balance and breadth of learning development. Giving children the opportunities to make choices and organise their play at an early age will prepare them for the time in later years when they have to make important decisions. The choices are made from activities that are well planned, purposeful and progressive; providing an appropriate level of interest for all the children, whatever their needs or abilities.

In both the nursery and the foundation setting, children are taught key subjects on a daily basis which include: phonics, maths, story/reading and fine motor skills. Children are given opportunities to consolidate and build on learning in these sessions through our continuous provision, which is available for sustained periods of time every day. Regular times to support Personal Social Emotional Development (PSED), language and communication are built in through snack times, circle times and 'news of the day'.

Key Curriculum Aims

We aim to use the child's natural curiosity and knowledge to structure play experiences that will help them develop. During the time spent in the Early Years, children will develop their ability to make choices, complete tasks, concentrate for longer periods of time, co-operate with their peers, increase their physical skills, begin reading and writing and develop their mathematical skills.

We promote learning and growth in all areas of the children's development - intellectual, physical, moral, spiritual and social. This is done in a learning environment where high expectations will realise the potential in all children. The staff all work together as a team to ensure that all children can achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of foundation. These goals are the basis to the stimulating activities provided as part of the structured programme we offer. This is done to nurture a love of learning and a desire to achieve their personal goals in life.

All children in the Early Years have equal access to the opportunities provided irrespective of their race, gender, religious or cultural beliefs, family background, home language, learning disabilities or abilities.

Teaching and learning style

Children at this stage are constructing a framework for learning and life. They are acquiring key attitudes to learning and exploring learning processes, as well as acquiring a core of knowledge and a grasp of language.

Initially information given by parents and other settings, then by our own observations, informs our planning of the learning environment to stimulate and motivate each child to progress at his/her own pace.

Our curriculum is child-centred, focused upon the development of the individual child, socially, emotionally, physically, aesthetically, morally and cognitively. We recognise that the needs of our young children are such that it is not possible to separate their need for learning experiences from their need for care and emotional support.

Children learn through their senses and through powerful interaction with their environment. There is a strong focus on play-based and outdoor learning together with a combination of structured play, first-hand experience and some directed teaching. The development of the whole child is considered crucial.

Active exploration and autonomy are encouraged. Opportunities for investigation and discovery in both the indoor and outdoor environment are provided and adults play a key role in enriching and extending learning potential. A wide range of resources is provided to stimulate interest and nurture curiosity. We plan a learning environment both indoors and outdoors that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use resources that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to select resources and make choices to develop independent learning.

Children are encouraged to be independent with their own learning experiences.

Inclusion in the Early Years

We believe that all of 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 we are planning for their learning (see our policy on inclusion).

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of this stage. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress, and providing support as necessary.

The EYFS curriculum

The Early Years Profile summarises and describes children's attainment to the end of the EYFS. It is based on ongoing observations and assessment in the three Prime Areas and four Specific Areas of learning, and the three Learning Characteristics: (see Early Years Curriculum Statement)

The Prime Areas of Learning:

- Communication and Language (CL);
- Physical Development (PD);
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED).

The Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy (L);
- Maths (M);
- Understanding the World (UTW);
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD).

The Characteristics of Learning:

- Playing and Exploring;
- Active Learning;
- Creating and Thinking Critically.

Our curriculum for the EYFS reflects the areas of learning identified in the 17 Early Learning Goals. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

The Early Learning Goals form part of the National Curriculum, and are in line with the objectives stated in the EYFS Guidance. Accordingly, from the beginning of the foundation year, our children have daily literacy, phonics and mathematics lessons. Teachers address these requirements in a flexible way at first, but by the end of the EYFS, as part of the smooth transition to Key Stage 1, they put these into regular operation. We also begin to introduce daily Guided Reading sessions when the children are ready.

Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS. Our medium-term planning is completed half termly and linked to topics. These plans identify the intended learning, with outcomes, and are flexible and can be adapted to match the children's interests and needs.

Assessment

We complete the statutory 'RBA' (2021) as well as our own adapted baseline assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the beginning of the Foundation Stage, and continue to assess at the end of each term to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the EYFS. We make regular assessments of children's learning using the scales as provided in the EYFS framework, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of written observations and photographic evidence, and this involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. Parents have the right to access their

child's Foundation Stage Profile upon request, and these also form the basis of discussions at parent/teacher meetings. The collection of assessment data in the EYFS is a statutory requirement.

Each child has their own learning journal which is a record of their work and development throughout the year, as well as containing a wide range of evidence from observations that we share with parents at each parental meeting. In nursery, parents also have access to view their child's learning development using an electronic portfolio on 'Class Dojo', as well as in their child's learning journal.

Parents receive a formal end of the year report. This report offers detailed comments on each child's attainment and progress in each area of learning, as well as in the Characteristics. They highlight the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- opportunities given to the children to spend time with their class before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- encouraging parents to use the home-school diary to inform teachers about any issues that may affect their child's behaviour;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

There are opportunities for formal meetings for parents to discuss their child's progress in private with the teacher and key workers.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Readiness for the Next Stage in Education

Children at Stowford experience a smooth, seamless transition between Nursery, Foundation and beyond. Effective communication and collaboration ensure the children leave the early years with a solid foundation of learning of which to build upon. Children are given time to reflect on their own learning and use their own child voice to become more powerful learners. Assessment starts with the statutory 'RBA' (2021), alongside additional careful baseline observations, which are then used to inform future planning and build a personal unique picture of the child. By monitoring the children's experiences and learning each term, we can effectively demonstrate what learning is taking place and how each child is progressing in all seven areas of the early years' curriculum. At the end of the early years, children are assessed against the early learning goals (ELG's). Most children will achieve a good level of development and will be ready for year 1.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Date Policy due for review: March 2024