

Wilton and Barford CE Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Principles and Aims of our Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

We aim to:

- provide a welcoming environment for children and their families with our open door policy
- ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued
- establish positive relationships with parents
- build on what children already know and can do
- celebrate achievement
- help children make links in their learning
- encourage independence
- value children's interests
- provide a balance of direct teaching and child initiated activities
- support children with special educational needs
- keep parents informed about the life of the school and their child's progress through informal conversations, the school website, parent teacher meetings and reports

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is for children aged three to the end of the Reception year. It is organised into 7 areas of learning:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The 7 areas of learning are then split into 17 Early Learning Goals which establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- explore learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills
- learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- co-operate as they talk or rehearse their feelings
- take risks and make mistakes
- think creatively and imaginatively
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
- express fears or discuss anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Staffing and Organisation

There is one Reception class, with a maximum intake of 28 children. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:14 within the Reception year; there is one teacher and a teaching assistant in the class throughout the school day. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. This time is supported by an adult, who acts as a facilitator to the child's learning. The teacher

liaises with the teaching assistant, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training. Practitioners also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues. They also liaise with the local pre-school nurseries on a regular basis.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things, and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Example topics include: 'All About Me', 'It's Dark', 'Traditional Tales', 'Down on the Farm', 'Pirates', 'Minibeasts'. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events, e.g. the Olympics.

Every term staff plan the next topic, and book visits and visitors that will enhance the children's learning.

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. Weekly plans are available for parents in the classroom and are summarised on the class' page on the school website.

Visits and Visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum is given great emphasis. We aim to build in many visits and visitors over the school year, ranging from a visit to the local farm to travelling to the seaside. We actively seek parental support on trips, aiming for a ratio of one adult for six children. Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor for example. We often ask parents if they are able (and brave enough!) to share knowledge or a skill, be it cooking, how to bath a baby, brick laying or playing guitar.

Teaching

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still, etc.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story at the end of the day, but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences (both indoors and outdoors) in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

Assessment

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of observation and practical activities. It involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

During the children's first half term in school we assess the ability of each child using Early Excellence and Development Matters. We may use this information to modify the teaching programme for individuals and groups of children. The Foundation Stage Profile is then completed throughout the year. Each child has an online Tapestry learning journal where we put in evidence of their learning to support judgements about attainment. Parents have access to these during school holidays. The final assessment results are sent off to the Local Authority in June. Early Years Foundation Stage judgements are based on how children are progressing against the 17 Early Learning Goal descriptors in accordance with their age and whether they are just emerging into age related expectations; at the expected level for their age or exceeding expectations for their age. Parents will be notified of their child's attainment at Open Night in July.

Induction

Summer term before entry:

- New parents are invited to attend a meeting with the Head and Reception teacher. This meeting includes oral information about the school's organisation, routines and ethos. There is an information pack and an opportunity to ask questions.
- The Reception teacher visits pre-schools and has informal conversations about children entering school in September.
- There are 6 induction visits to introduce the children to the classroom and routines. Parents are encouraged to 'stay and play' for the first induction session, and then workshops are run for parents following this.

Autumn term:

- The Reception teacher and teaching assistant make home visits in the first few days.
- Following home visits, all children have the opportunity to start school full time.

Home and School Links

Parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and 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.

To develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers:

- A parent consultation will be held early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- A termly newsletter will be sent giving details of the term's topic and learning.
- We will operate an 'open door' policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if staff have any concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Workshops will be held for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school and to make it easier to emulate them at home.
- We will conduct further parent consultation to inform parents and carers formally of a child's results and overall progress.
- There will be opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning by assisting with listening to readers.

Safeguarding

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns are noted and a record kept by Early Years Foundation Stage staff and referred to the school's designated Safeguarding Lead Teacher.

Any concerns, which the school has, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Equal Opportunities

All children and their families are valued. 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 special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools Inclusion manager is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion policy for SEN.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

Transition to Year 1

At Wilton and Barford:

- children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the Reception year
- children meet the Year 1 teacher during assembly, playtime and other whole school activities during the Reception year
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile end of year class summary is passed on to the Year 1 teacher
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a session in July
- there is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when children move into Year 1