



Early Years Policy



Early Years Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the Mosaic Federation policy review cycle.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Board in December 2023

It is due for review in 2025

Head Teacher:	Date:
Chair of Governors:	Date:
Vice Chair of Governors:	Date:



Valley View Primary School **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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 EYFS 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the period of time from a child’s birth to the end of their reception year. At Valley View Primary School, this applies to the time children are in nursery and reception year groups. Children join us in nursery at the beginning of the school year in which they turn four or if there are spaces, the term after they turn three years old. They begin attending reception class full time at the start of the term in which they turn five. We offer various provision types and they are as follows: mornings only, afternoons only and full time 30 hours provision.

We work as an Early Years Unit at Valley View Primary School and this means that for some of the day nursery and reception children work together in the same environment. This benefits children as they are in the same part of the school for a longer period of time (both nursery and reception). This makes the first few years of education a time of emotional security, which builds confidence and reduces the disruption that may be caused by transition. Children have familiar routines and work with the same team of familiar adults. Staff get to know children and families very well, making it easier to cater for their needs and support children’s development. The unit also allows both older and younger children to work together, providing excellent peer group support.

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2021, which sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old. All schools and Ofsted registered early years providers must follow the EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles:

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

A Unique Child

At Valley View Primary 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.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate against children because of their ‘differences’. All children at Valley View Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender or ability. In our school, all children are valued and we believe that all 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 planning for their learning.

In the EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- 1 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.

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. 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 Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

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 Valley View 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.

In order to promote the welfare of all children in our care, we:

- 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 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 is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At Valley View 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 are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the crucial role that parents play in educating their children. We aim to promote

partnerships with parents through:

- Offering home visits to all children prior to starting in our nursery setting and talking to parents about their child before their child starts nursery;
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- Providing the opportunity for children to spend time with their teacher and keyworkers before starting school during our 'Come and Join in' visits;
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journal' books;
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher or key worker if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher or key worker and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Arranging a range of regular activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Stay and Play sessions, Sports Day, etc.
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their child's children's 'Learning Journal' books in the form of WOW moments and holiday homework which allow parents to leave comments relating to the children's achievements.

All staff working within the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At Valley View Primary School, each child is assigned to a 'Key Worker' who will be the parents and child's key contact. The 'Key Worker' will share information about children's progress to parents at Parents Evenings.

Enabling Environments

At Valley View Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development both indoors and outdoors. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS is based around children's interests and needs and chosen themes that will be covered over a half term.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation and this involves practitioners observing children closely in play-based activities. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journal' books.

At Valley View Primary School, we track individual children's progress closely throughout the year in order to ascertain the age band they are working within in order for us to plan for their next steps in learning. This is clearly documented within the children's individual 'Learning Journal' books and on the school's EYFS tracking system.

Within the final term of reception class, it is a statutory requirement to assess all children's attainment against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG's). This information is then to be submitted to the Local Authority (LA) for analysis. We will then provide a written summary to parents, reporting their child's progress against the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) and a short narrative about *how* their child learns (*Characteristics of Learning*). Parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher should they wish.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years provision 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 early years provision is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The provision have their own enclosed outdoor areas. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It caters for different learning styles. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning (see Learning & Development below).

In addition to this, we have our on-site Forest School that the children have regular weekly access to. Forest School is an inspirational concept providing learning opportunities through practical activities in an outdoor environment. Children enjoy the freedom to explore and experience the natural world in all seasons and in all weathers. Forest School embraces an approach of nurturing, supporting and developing the self-esteem of participants. It is an ideal environment in which to develop innovation, problem solving, risk taking, creativity and teamwork. The safety and welfare of the pupils participating in Forest School is paramount and therefore all tasks are age-appropriate and risk assessments have been carried out for all activities prior to taking place.

Learning and Development

At Valley View Primary School, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. Children access a curriculum which is play based and provides playful learning experiences through which they can learn and develop. Opportunities for children to develop these skills independently, are provided throughout the learning environment in the form of resource enhancements to each area.

Teaching and Learning

Our whole school policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage One and Two.

We aim to:

- 1 Develop the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
 - Recognise how young children develop and learn, and how this will affect teaching and learning;
 - Use a range of approaches that provide practical, play based, first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
 - Operate a carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
 - Enable children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
 - Encourage children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
 - Support learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
 - Identify the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with practitioners and parents;
 - Develop good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Characteristics of Learning:

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in EYFS are:

1. Playing and Exploring

Play is essential for 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. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas and 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

2. Active Learning

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 to have 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.

3. Creativity and Critical Thinking

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.

Our children are given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the environment to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning and Development:

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning. There are three prime areas and four specific areas of learning as follows:

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and are all interconnected. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations that most children should reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the Early Years Lead regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher, EYFS Lead and Senior Management Team (SMT) will carry out regular monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.