



Swallowtail Federation of Church Schools

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extends from the age of nought to the end of the reception year. Entry into our schools is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).
- 1.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also 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.
- 1.3 Children joining our schools have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. 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.

2 Aims of the Foundation Stage

- 2.1 The curriculum of the EYFS underpins all future learning by promoting and developing:

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World

3 Teaching and learning style

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

3.2 The more general features of good practice in our schools that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents 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 EYFS;
- 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 EYFS.

4 Play at the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and 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.

5 Inclusion at the Early Years Foundation Stage

5.1 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 we are planning for their learning (see our Single Equality Scheme and Special Educational Needs Policy).

5.2 At 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 the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. 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.

5.3 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;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid 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 providing support (such as speech therapy) as necessary.

6 The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

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

6.2 The Early Learning Goals form part of the National Curriculum, and are in line with the objectives stated in the National Curriculum. Accordingly, by the end of the reception year, our children have a daily mathematics lesson and a literacy hour. 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 the literacy hour and daily mathematics lesson into regular operation.

6.3 The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for individual children. Our medium-term planning is completed half-termly, and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards Levels 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum.

7 Assessment

7.1 The EYFS Curriculum 'Developing Matters' is used nationally to assess pupil achievements against the Early Learning Goals in each of the Prime and

Specific areas of development. Teachers record pupil progress throughout the year by making continuous assessments. We use this information to ensure that planning reflects identified needs for individuals and/or for the group. Assessment in the EYFS may be made by teachers and other adults, as appropriate.

- 7.2** During the autumn term 'On-entry assessment' is carried out within the first few weeks of a child starting school. These results then begin the school tracking records. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children..
- 7.3** The teacher completes an assessment at the end of each term, and the results are added to the in-school assessment programme. At the end of the final term in reception we submit a summary of the final assessment against the Early Learning Goals. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings.
- 7.4** Each teacher keeps progress books, and uses these to record examples of each child's work. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.
- 7.5** Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

8 The role of parents

- 8.1** 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:
- opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher 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 in our reception class;
 - encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
 - having flexible admission arrangements, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
 - being welcoming if the need arises that parents need to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;
 - offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
 - providing various activities that involve parents, i.e. regular communication with home through the child's school diary, and inviting parents to curriculum evenings, in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking.
- 8.2** There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the parents discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their

child's attainment and progress through the EYFS at the end of each school year.

9 Resources

- 9.1** 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.

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1** This policy is monitored by the governing body, and will be reviewed in three years, or earlier if necessary.

Agreed by staff:

Date: June 2014

Agreed by Governors:

Date: