

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their child safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.” *EYFS 2017*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. We start the school year with 1:1 parent and child consultations, this will give you and your child the opportunity to meet with the class teacher. Your child will then attend school for four full days, Monday-Thursday. They will have Fridays off until October half term. If your child finds four full days too tiring, we may recommend an afternoon or morning off. The majority of children will be in full time Monday-Friday, after October half term.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four principles, each principle has commitments describing how the principles can be put into practice.

- **A Unique Child**

Recognises that every child is a competent learner from birth, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focussed around development; inclusion; safety; health and well-being.

- **Positive Relationships**

Describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. The commitments are focussed around respect; partnerships with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.

- **Enabling Environments**

Explains that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. The commitments are focussed around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context – transitions, continuity and multi-agency working.

- **Learning and Development**

Recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has seven areas of learning which are divided into two main areas; Prime and Specific.

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. There are seventeen Early Learning Goals. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Each child learns in the context of the relationships and environment which surrounds them. This is demonstrated in their Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL). We consider these when planning for your child. They are:

- **Playing and Exploring- Engagement**

“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, 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.

- **Active Learning- Motivation**

“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 satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and Thinking Critically- 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.”

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

A Unique Child

At Vallis First 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, 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 assemblies and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Vallis First School are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that all 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 and interests when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of the 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 our children through:

- 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 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

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."

It is important to us that all children in our 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)

At Vallis First 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 2017

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children by having knowledge of and access to the detailed information stated within the current Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies

- 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 children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- Ensure that 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

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive relationships

At Vallis First School we recognise that children learn to be strong independent learners from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We 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 they start in our school
- Giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during our Play to Learn session and Transfer morning
- Inviting all parents to an Induction Meeting during the term before their child starts school
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk to their child's class teacher and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' booklets
- Encouraging the parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the parent and teacher discuss the child's progress in private. Parents will receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Family Learning events; Harvest assembly; Sports Day; Christmas and other performances, etc.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children in the EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistant. We have good links with the local nurseries which EYFS teachers visit prior to your child starting school to discuss their needs.

Enabling Environments

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

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom 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 classroom is set up in a way whereby the children can find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classrooms have their own enclosed outdoor area. 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 offers children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We regularly access the outdoor space during the day and plan activities and use resources that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term and Medium Term plans, which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning, however the teachers may alter these in response to the needs and interests of the children. This will be indicated on the weekly planning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and use the information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. We are currently exploring 'Tapestry', a web based programme that allows us to record observations and photographs of the children as they play and learn.

Within the final term of the EYFS we use Sims to record the final profile judgements against the ELGs. We also provide a written summary to parents and carers, reporting the children's progress and judgement scales against the ELGs. We give parents/carers the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers 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 practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Headteacher and subject coordinators will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

