



Vallis First School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Intent

Our curriculum is designed to recognise children's prior learning, both from previous settings and their experiences at home. We work in partnership with parents, carers and other settings to provide the best possible start at Vallis First School, ensuring each individual reaches their full potential from their various starting points.

Our curriculum has been designed to enable children to succeed through cooperative and collaborative learning principles. As such, there is a strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication and Language, including Oracy.

At Vallis First School we recognise that oracy not only improves academic outcomes, but is a life skill to ensure success beyond school, in life and future employment. Oracy develops children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy which support the child's well-being. Our enabling environments and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start.

We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking. We follow children's interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning both in and outside of school.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil 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." *EYFS Reforms Statutory Framework*

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 not come into to school on Fridays until October half term. We have found, through experience and parental feedback, that children settle better and form important relationships very quickly when they attend full days at the beginning. 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 framework is structured differently to the national curriculum; it has seven **Areas of Learning** rather than subject areas. The seven areas of learning are divided into two main areas - Prime and Specific.

Prime Areas

Communication and Language - The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation,

story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development - Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practise of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Specific Areas

Literacy - It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics - Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently; develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10; the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities

to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics; look for patterns and relationships; spot connections; 'have a go'; talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World - Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them - from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design - The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

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.

The **ELGs** are:

Communication and Language

Listening, Attention and Understanding - Children at the expected level of development will: listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions; make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding; hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

Speaking - Children at the expected level of development will: participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary; offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate; express their ideas and feelings

about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Self-Regulation - Children at the expected level of development will: show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly; set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate; give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

Managing Self - Children at the expected level of development will: be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge; explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly; manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

Building Relationships - Children at the expected level of development will: work and play cooperatively and take turns with others; form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers; show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Physical Development

Gross Motor Skills - Children at the expected level of development will: negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others; demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor Skills - Children at the expected level of development will: hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing - using the tripod grip in almost all cases; use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery; begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Literacy

Comprehension - Children at the expected level of development will: demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; anticipate, where appropriate, key events in stories; use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

Word Reading - Children at the expected level of development will: say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs; read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending; read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Writing - Children at the expected level of development will: write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed; spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters; write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics

Number - Children at the expected level of development will: have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number; subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5; automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

Numerical Patterns - Children at the expected level of development will: verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system; compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity; explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Understanding the World

Past and Present - Children at the expected level of development will: talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society; know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

People, Culture and Communities - Children at the expected level of development will: describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps; know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and, when appropriate, maps.

The Natural World - Children at the expected level of development will: explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants; know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class; understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design

Creating with Materials - Children at the expected level of development will: safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function; share their creations, explaining the process they have used; make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

Being Imaginative and Expressive - Children at the expected level of development will: invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher; sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs; perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and, when appropriate, try to move in time with music.

National Curriculum Links

National Curriculum	Early Years Foundation Stage
English	Communication and Language Physical Development Literacy Expressive Arts and Design
Mathematics	Communication and Language Mathematics
Science	Communication and Language Physical Development Understanding the World
Art and Design	Physical Development Expressive Arts and Design
Religious Education	Personal Social and Emotional Development Understanding the World
Computing	Personal Social and Emotional Development Physical Development Understanding the World Expressive Arts and Design
Design and Technology	Physical Development Expressive Arts and Design
Geography	Mathematics Understanding the World
History	Communication and Language Understanding the World
Music	Communication and Language Physical Development Expressive Arts and Design
Physical Education	Personal Social and Emotional Development Physical Development Expressive Arts and Design
PSHE	Communication and Language Personal Social and Emotional Development Physical Development Understanding the World

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 satisfaction 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.

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.

Reviewed by: Jo Higgins

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