

# Milverton Primary School

## Early Year Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



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### Aims

*Our main aim is to enable every child to achieve his or her potential. To do this, we need to create a peaceful environment in which tolerance, mutual cooperation and stability are encouraged, so that each child can work productively, learn to make decisions, use his or her own judgement and co-operate courteously with others.*

*As a school, we are trying to achieve these high standards by responding professionally, sensitively and caringly to the needs of all our pupils.*

### The Curriculum

The Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available from the school office or to download at [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf). This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the Prime Areas.

The Prime Areas are;

- ❖ **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- ❖ **Physical Development** – Moving and Handling and Self care
- ❖ **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making Relationships, Managing Feelings and Behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The Specific Areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The Specific Areas are;

- ❖ **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- ❖ **Mathematics** – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- ❖ **Understanding the World** – People and Communities, The World and Technology
- ❖ **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and using Media and Materials and Being Imaginative

### Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- ❖ **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- ❖ **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- ❖ **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## Teaching strategies

We follow Anna Ephgrave's model of *In the Moment Planning*.

*In the Moment Planning* is a very simple idea – observing and interacting with children as they pursue their own interests and also assessing and moving the learning on in that **moment**. The written account of some of these interactions during a focus week, becomes a learning journey. The interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and encourage children to question what they are doing through pondering, which is all led by the child's spark and interest.

## Induction

Our children firstly take part in a stay and play session with a parent or adult from home in the preceding summer term. We then offer a home visit to meet with parents, carers and child in their home setting. Children then begin the school year completing a half day with only their class and then a half day with all the reception children. Children are then offered to start half days with dinner and full days if parents would like them to complete full days. The third week after home visits, welcomes all children in full time.

## Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences 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.

## Teaching

At times we will include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. 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 phonics, stories and sometimes number. 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 EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We aim to make sure there is always time for whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child is given their own book bag and each child will participate in a group reading session where they will be given a weekly reading book, starting after the October half term.

## Planning

Following *In the Moment Planning* approach, the planning effort needed is to prepare an engaging environment with materials that will excite and interest the children, rather than detailing focus activities. Then it is important to showcase the child-led learning that has taken place to show how learning was further extended in the moment.

We recognise that some children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Therefore, we have a loose one-year topic cycle which will influence the books that staff will choose to read, or enhancements to the environment that may be appropriate, for example; a box of Chinese New Year resources.

### **Visits and visitors**

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Milverton is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. We aim to have a visit and/or visitor each term, e.g. a visit to the Farm. We actively seek parental support on trips, aiming for a safe ratio of adults to children. For safety reasons we say no to younger siblings coming along on school trips.

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, for example, painting mehndi patterns on hands.

### **Classroom environment**

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Each classroom has a carpeted teaching area and the children are encouraged to free-flow between the two indoor classrooms, where there are writing areas, maths areas, creative area, book corners, role play area, construction/small world areas and a malleable area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session/day is. The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom and (weather permitting) many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. At the beginning of the school year, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key. At lunch break, Reception also share the time with the whole school where they can choose to stay in the designated Infant area, or mix with the Junior children if they so wish. The Reception classes also benefit from a fortnightly Forest School lesson led by Sports coaches.

Each child has their own labelled locker in the corridor area to store their coat, wellies, spare clothes and their book bag. We encourage children to take responsibility for their own belongings and children are expected to unpack their own bags each morning and pack them each day before home time.

### **Assessment, observations and portfolios**

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual Learning Journal. We are very proud of our Journals: these are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child.

Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team and these next steps may inform planning for the next day and week ahead.

Parents have access to the Learning Journals which are stored in the classroom. They are encouraged to contribute to these through the use of our Home Learning Observation sheets. These are designed to be completed prior to a child's 'focus' week. They are available from EYFS staff and can be taken home to complete or can be completed with the support of a member of staff. We recognise the importance of the Learning Journal reflecting the 'whole child' and understand that parents will witness many milestones in their child's development that may not be seen by school staff. The Learning Journal is shared with Year One staff and then given to parents when their child enters Year 1 or leaves our setting.

On entry to Reception we carry out baseline assessments for each child. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits end of term assessment data to the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed with class teachers in the Summer term open afternoon.

### **Starting School**

Starting school is a magical time for children and families, it can also present challenge and anxiety for both children and parents. We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible and put in place some key features to help aid their start to school.

We hold:

Tours of the school, prior to application.

A parent meeting at the beginning of June, following places being assigned.

Stay and play sessions

Teachers come out to see parents on home visits in the first week of school.

Children will then come into school on their own for their first morning. One class will attend the first morning and the other class attending on the second.

All children will then attend on the third day, until lunchtime.

The following week we will then have all children in full time.

### **Role of staff**

The class teachers are responsible for the progress of each child in their class. Each class benefits from a full time Teaching Assistant and where a child has specific needs relating to their learning development or health there may be additional staff in place. Each member of the EYFS staff works to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

### **Partnership with parents and carers**

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. In the summer term prior to September admission we offer a New Parents Welcome Evening as well as Reception visit days. In the Autumn term we hold Phonics and Numeracy workshops to offer advice to parents on how we approach these subjects and how parents can support at home. We also invite parents to engage in their child's learning through the year in activities such as Christmas Craft day or Pirate day.

When a child gains a place at Milverton we ask them to attend a session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting and with their parents.

There is a transition booklet online for parents to share with their child over the summer which includes photographs of relevant staff and images of the EYFS environment. We offer a home visit in September, prior to starting school and here provide a booklet to be completed by parent and child and this document is the first piece in their Learning Journal. Over the first few days at the school we encourage parents and carers to bring their child to the gate and encourage independence, leaving promptly as experience dictates that this ensure for a smooth and calm transition in the morning.

Parents are invited to attend a Learning Review meeting in the Autumn and Spring term and an open afternoon in the Summer term. Class teachers are available by appointment after school and at least one member of the EYFS team will be available at morning drop-off for parents to pass on urgent information. Children are provided with a home school communication book where parents can also pass on information to EYFS staff, for example, a change on home time routine.

### **Health & safety and safeguarding**

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014).

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets.

This is in line with E-Safety and Safeguarding Policy. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's Journals, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit from a Government scheme. Four year old children receive free milk and once a child is five, if parents wish for their child to continue drinking milk in school they are required to pay for this via the company *Cool Milk*. We encourage children to drink water throughout the day and all children are required to have their own water bottle in school.

All children in school are able to choose a hot dinner provided by school (free for children in Reception, Year 1 and 2 from September 2014), or bring a healthy packed lunch from home.

We take all accidents seriously and always log these and send a text message to parents if a child bangs their head. We have cold compresses stored in the Infant freezer and there are Paediatric First Aiders throughout the school. A call to parents would be made in the event of a more serious accident requiring medical treatment or in the event that a child becomes ill at school and needs to be taken home. We have a strict rule in the event of diarrhoea and/or vomiting that children must remain at home from school for 48 hours after the last incident of this.

We acknowledge that young children often have toileting 'accidents' and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in toilet area and this is logged by the supporting adult.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and evacuation fire drill and lockdown drills are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Matt Fisher is the named Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head teacher, all concerns about children are discussed with him.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.