



St Margaret's C of E VA Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Unit Policy 2018

Agreed by Governors:

December 2018

Review Date:

January 2021

Next Review Date:

January 2022

St Margaret's CE VA Primary School

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 it’s 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 children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.” (DCSF 2007)

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework produced by the DCSF and sets the standards for learning and development of children from birth to five. At St Margaret's our children join us at any time aged between 2 – 5 years in our Foundation Stage Unit.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Margaret’s 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 Well Done assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals. All children at St Margaret’s School are treated fairly regardless of culture, race, religion or ability. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school 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.

Children with special educational needs are identified and supported in liaison with the Special needs coordinator and /or appropriate outside agencies where relevant

We aim to meet the needs of all 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;
- planning learning opportunities through play and exploration;
- 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 which enable them to make appropriate choices. 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.

"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 believe that we should:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At St Margaret's 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.

Every child is allocated a Key Worker who will be responsible for the learning and development and assessment as well as the pastoral care of their allocated children.

Parents as Partners

We acknowledge that parents 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 their children.

We do this through:

- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during 'induction' sessions **and have a home visit**.
- We offer parents regular informal opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our FSU (daily when appropriate).
- We offer a formal parental consultation meeting for parents at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. (These are 1:1 sessions during the first part of the Autumn Term and Spring Term)
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year. They are also invited to arrange a further private meeting if wished to discuss their child's report further.
- Parents are invited to come in every day to help their child settle, and join in activities with them.

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. We have good links with local pre-schools. Regular visits are undertaken if needed by the EYFS teacher if new children are joining us from another setting.

Enabling Environments

At St Margaret's 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 the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS FSU follows the school's Two Year Rolling programme. Each half terms work is based on a book or text with supporting additional books to enhance the topic. These themes are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teachers may alter these plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants 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 the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual booklets, individual on-line Tapestry Learning Journey, and also in their Personal Pathway books.

In addition, our two year olds will have their 2 year old check at approximately 2 years and 3 months or 5/6 weeks after joining the setting if they are over 2 years 6 months.

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 learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has its own covered and uncovered outdoor area fenced off for safety. 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 the children 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 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

At St Margaret's 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 inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout 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 indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents. This includes the on-line Tapestry Learning Journal which is accessed at home by the child's designated adults
- the good relationships between our school and the .settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Play

"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

“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.”(DCSF 2007)

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.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

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. Adults at St Margaret’s support in this process and enhance 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. During Child initiated and plan- do & review time pupils have free access to a range of resources both inside and out

Areas of Learning

The EYFS has 7 areas of development, 3 primes

- Personal, social and Emotional.
- Communication, language and literacy.
- Physical development

and 4 specific

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- 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. 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 for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Transition

During the Summer Term the EYFS teacher will visit, at their setting if appropriate, new children between 2 – 4 years old who will be joining our setting in September. This will be in their preschool setting, if they are not in our FSU, and talk with their current key worker. Also they are visited in their own home. The children are then invited to three induction sessions where they get to meet each other and the staff. An informal meeting is held for the parents to discuss transition, and any concerns they may have. The EYFS teachers and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss transition into Year 1, and this is explained more in the transition policy.

Continuing Professional Development

All Teachers, Teaching Assistants and FSU Staff are given opportunities to keep up to date with new developments. This takes the form of either external courses, local liaisons or in house trainings and observations. The EYFS Co-coordinator keeps a record of all courses attended, and organises in-house trainings that are required. Staff also have weekly planning meetings.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

In 2018 the Department for Education (DfE) proposed changes to the early learning goals and the assessment process within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). For the year 2020-2021 we have chosen to participate in the early trials of the Early Adopters. The changes will come into force from September 2021.

In line with this, we will update the Early Years Policy in January 2022.