



# **Wrawby St Mary's CE Primary School**



## **Early Years Policy**

Reviewed October: 2025

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in 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. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides this reassurance.’

Children start Wrawby St. Mary’s CE Primary at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five years old. They start the first week by attending full time.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

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 and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within our school. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. 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. Throughout our school, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children.

We meet the needs of our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, whilst developing 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 all children
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

## **Safeguarding and 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 school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why these rules 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 meet these requirements by following the policies and procedures that have been written and adopted by the whole school.

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements to include:

- 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 working with the children 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 Early Years Foundation Stage and to meet the needs of the children

## **Positive relationships**

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.

We recognise 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 the children. We do this through:

- Inviting all parents to a new starter meeting during the term before their child starts school
- The class teacher and/or Early Years Practitioner attend home visits to parents and children before they start our school
- Children attend a series of transition sessions in the term before they start school
- Providing all parents with a welcome pack, with information about starting our school
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress both formally at parents’ evenings and informally on a daily basis
- Parents are invited in to share the Christmas Nativity performance and twice yearly in whole-school craft afternoons near Christmas and Easter
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher if there are any concerns

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.

### **Enabling environments**

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.

The Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and where they can be quiet. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. It also has its 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 the children chance 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 seven areas of learning.

### **Learning and Development**

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.

Features of effective teaching and learning in 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 expectations, 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
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school

## **Characteristics of Learning**

We value different children's learning styles in Reception so focus on three characteristics of effective teaching and learning including:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

### **Playing and Exploring**

'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.'

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**

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. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

## **Early Learning Goals**

The levels children should be expected to have attained by the end of their Reception year are defined by the Early Learning Goals. They include the three prime areas of learning:

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

And, four specific areas of learning:

- 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. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, in each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

A typical day in the Reception classroom includes:

- A 40-minute phonic session, with activities provided for children to continue their learning during their continuous provision session should they wish to do so
- A 20-minute maths session, with activities provided for children to continue their learning during their continuous provision session should they wish to do so
- Whole class teaching and/or discussions, this includes our Talking and Thinking Floorbook time where we focus on different topics (child initiated as much as possible, with some areas directed, as links are made to the whole school curriculum)
- Small group times
- Adult-led focus activities
- Adult-led play
- Continuous provision child-initiated play
- Outdoor play

Our learning environment is organised into specific areas. The children are taught how to use these areas and to access the resources independently during their continuous provision time. They are taught how to play with the equipment and resources in a respectful manner and how to tidy away the area before the end of the session, or if they choose to move areas. Adults also play, interact and observe the children during this time, leading learning, modelling play and interaction and planning next steps. The children are able to use these areas to:

- Initiate their own ideas
- Demonstrate their skills and abilities
- Communicate their thoughts and feelings
- Follow on and extend adult-led activities to deepen their learning and develop mastery skills

The indoor continuous provision areas are:

- Mark making
- Book corner
- Workshop
- Malleable
- Paint
- Maths
- Home corner
- Computing
- Small world
- Construction
- Exploration

The outdoor continuous provision areas are:

- Construction
- Den play
- Water
- Sand
- Small world
- Mud kitchen
- PE
- Reading

These areas are regularly enhanced with different resources linked to the children's interests and topics being covered in the classroom.

### **Observation, assessment and planning**

We 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 teachers and Early Years Practitioners. These observations are recorded in children's learning journeys on Tapestry. We record these judgements against Development Matters Statements, Characteristics of Effective Learning and The Early Learning Goals.

We assess the children each term and the Early Years Checkpoint Tracker which has been developed by the LAAT is a useful tool for the discussions we hold as a team to assess the children. We update the Class Page on the website and share photos on Tapestry, which the parents can like and comment on, as well as posting any significant events that they experience with their children at home. We comment on the Learning With Parents platform when evidence of reading at home is shared with us in the form of comments, photos and voice recordings of early reading.

Within the final term of the Reception year, we provide a written report to parents, reporting on their progress against the Characteristics of Effective Learning. At the end of the school year, we also send parents a written report of whether the children are meeting **expected** levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels and are therefore **emerging**.

Year 1 teachers are then given a copy of this report together with a discussion about each child in terms of their skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This assists with their planning of activities for Year 1.

Early Years providers must report the results of the Foundation Stage Profile to the Local Authority. The Local Authority then returns this data to the national government. Local Authorities also have a duty to monitor and moderate the EYFS profile judgements to ensure consistency across all settings.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS Leader and their team to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and Senior Teacher will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole-school monitoring schedule.