



# Stebbing Primary School

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Created/updated February 2018

Ratified By Governing Body February 2018

Due for review February 2020

## **Aim of this policy**

The aim of this policy is to inform staff, parents/carers, governors, pupils and visitors of how the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework is implemented within our reception class at Stebbing Primary School.

## **Definition of the EYFS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a statutory framework that sets the standards for learning, development and care for children up to the age of 5. This framework is statutory in all mainstream schools and nurseries, providing consistency during the transition from nursery to school. It will be used by Ofsted to make inspection judgements of the reception provision provided.

*The EYFS framework was last updated in 2014.*

## **Aims of the EYFS**

The EYFS framework aims to ensure that all children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe through effective teaching and learning. It seeks to provide quality and consistency across all settings, a secure foundation for all children, partnership working between practitioners and parents/carers and equality of opportunity for all children.

The EYFS consists of 7 areas of learning and development:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the world

Expressive arts and design

Within each area the age related expectations are specified in statements. These statements lead to an early learning goal (ELG) that children work towards achieving by the end of the reception school year.

## **Our ethos**

At Stebbing Primary School we believe that children learn most effectively when they feel happy, secure and valued. Our practice is underpinned by the four principles, as stated in the EYFS framework, that each child is *unique* and should have opportunities to develop *positive relationships*, experience *enabling environments* and receive *individually* targeted activities. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which stimulates, engages and motivates our children to develop intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically and creatively. We also give children choice over when, where and how they learn to promote independence.

## **Montessori approach**

Maria Montessori developed a highly effective method of teaching that could be used with great success with each and every child. Through her research she found that children learn best by doing. Children who were given these opportunities became happy, self-motivated learners who formed positive self-images.

Underpinning her philosophy is the importance of the child, the practitioner and the equipment to enhance learning. Fundamentally, Montessori believed in giving children the ability to become independent learners. Therefore, the practitioner's role is to facilitate the child's learning by presenting suitable equipment and identifying ways in which the child could progress. The equipment is carefully designed to teach a specific learning objective. Children are given the opportunity to explore new equipment before the practitioner introduces a more structured activity to aid learning. As stated in our Montessori Accreditation Report (2014):

*The environment is carefully prepared for the children's use. Accessible and inviting materials are provided in spacious and welcoming classrooms and outdoor spaces.*

*The staff work very hard to ensure that what they provide for the children is genuinely meeting their needs in a wholly nurturing environment.*

### **Play based learning**

*"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play, which is guided by adults." (EYFS, 2014).*

Therefore, play underpins the learning and development that takes place within our reception class. A careful balance of 'child-led' and 'adult-led' play-based activities are consistently evident and the adults are always prepared to follow the children's interests. This play takes place both inside and outside of the classroom with the opportunity for free-flow between the two.

### **Teaching and learning**

Effective teaching and learning is at the centre of early years practice. It includes whole class teaching, group teaching, one-to-one activities and independent exploration.

We believe that effective teaching involves:

- Having a good knowledge of each individual child's preferences, needs, requirements and ability
- Promoting children's learning through carefully planned opportunities and activities
- Promoting positive attitudes towards learning
- Modelling a range of positive attitudes and behaviour
- Using open-ended and challenging questions
- Directly teaching skills and knowledge to a high quality
- Supporting the development of social skills within learning
- Encouraging children teaching each other
- Utilising the outdoor environment to provide an enriching context for learning
- Making informed judgements of the children's progress and next steps
- Planning appropriately for the children to continue achieving their next steps
- Using assessment of gaps in learning to evaluate the quality of the environment, provision and practitioners
- Working in partnership with parents/carers to gain an informed understanding of each child.

We believe that effective learning occurs when:

- Children have opportunities to initiate their own ideas and activities
- Children participate in active play that involve a variety of senses
- Children participate in imaginative activities
- Children participate in activities that develop their language skills
- Children have time and freedom to explore
- Children feel safe, secure and confident
- Children learn at their own rate and in their own way
- Children can make links and think critically and reflectively
- Children can explore things in a variety of ways to find what suits them
- Children have the opportunity for challenge

Within the early years, continuous provision is essential to ensure that children are learning through their play even without direct adult support. To achieve this we use 'challenges' that are strategically placed within the environment and based on areas of need. The challenges may have three levels of differentiation based on skill, equipment or possible level of support. Each child then has opportunities throughout the week to complete each of these challenges.

## **Planning**

The class teacher has the responsibility to carefully plan purposeful activities that consider the children's interests, needs and gaps in learning.

In our reception class the concept of 'objective led planning' is utilised. This focuses on one or two EYFS areas a week and is based on the children's current abilities with the aim that they will all achieve their next step in that area. The practitioner's role is to become actively involved in child led play and strategically teach the objective to the children either individually or in groups. This process continues across the week until the practitioner is confident that each child has progressed.

Alongside this approach, topic-based activities are also resourced and delivered by all supporting adults within the environment. These topics are mainly chosen by the children and based on their current interests. The main purpose is to challenge and excite children in order to develop their individual learning needs.

To inform planning, the involved adults record observations from the objective led planning and discuss the children and the progress they are making on a regular basis. The ways that children learn are also considered during the planning process in order to support playful, explorative and active learning and develop creative and critical thinking skills.

## **Assessment**

The role of assessment in the early years is to ensure that practitioners have a secure knowledge of each child and can use this to inform future planning of the environment and teaching. It enables practitioners to identify the progress made against the EYFS framework and identify strengths and areas of need.

Prior to the children starting their reception year we have regular contact with the Montessori nursery on site and other local nurseries to give us an informed starting point. Throughout the year all practitioners make observations of the children using My Montessori Child. This program allows practitioners to photograph, annotate and identify children's achievements against Montessori areas and the EYFS framework. Samples of work are also evidenced and used to support the assessment process, particularly in literacy.

Our process of assessment includes:

Initial baseline assessment

Highlighting of the EYFS framework statements and early learning goals when achieved (throughout the year)

End of year judgements against the ELG's

End of year judgement of the characteristics of effective learning (see EYFS framework)

End of year EYFS Profile (see EYFS framework) – statutory assessment

## **Outdoor environment**

We believe that the outdoor environment should act as a second classroom for the children. To ensure this we aim to provide equal opportunities and accessible resources in both environments. Children are provided with 'free flow' times throughout the day whereby they can choose to be inside or outside. Wherever they choose to be the adults ensure that they are accessing exciting and challenging activities that promote all areas of the EYFS.

## **Snack**

As our children are always on the go we feel that it is essential for them to have constant access to liquids and regular food intake. Therefore the children have a morning snack time between 9:45 and 11:00 each day. Parents can contribute by bringing in a 'special' snack every so often. Food allergies are taken into serious consideration when snack is being brought in and no foods containing nuts are available. Children with dairy allergies also have access to dairy free milk and yoghurts. Any other allergies are catered for on a needs basis.

## **Parent partnership**

Upon children entering their school career we believe that building a positive and strong partnership with parents and carers is essential. Prior to the children starting, parents are invited to an induction meeting and have a follow-up meeting in September. Throughout the year parents are invited to multiple open sessions where we demonstrate how we learn and celebrate our hard work. At the end of the year parents receive a formal report to provide an overview of the progress made. Parent/carer helpers are always welcomed into our classroom.

To give parents a more regular insight into school days, parents have secure logins to the My Montessori Child website and ClassDojo whereby weekly observations are published for the parents to see. Parents are encouraged to send us photos and comments from home through the site. Other ways of gaining parent feedback may also be used to keep us informed of out of school achievements. Parents are also kept updated of the teaching and learning through the fortnightly Stebbing Spotlight.

At Stebbing Primary School we have an open door policy, giving parents the opportunity to discuss any questions or queries that they may have at any time. We also host family consultation meetings with the parents twice a year.

## **Transition to Reception**

The transition to school is carefully planned. Activities include: a home visit with the class teacher and support staff; messy play sessions giving children the chance to meet new friends; time to stay for a school lunch with parents; as well as more informal visits alongside our nursery.

## **Special Education Needs**

A priority of the early years is to make early identifications and interventions for any individual learning needs. These will be discussed with parents/carers, the SENCO and outside agencies if required to provide the child with a personalised and differentiated learning experience. This ensures that the child can access what is developmentally suitable for them and be able to participate in all activities alongside their peers. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be placed on the school SEN register and monitored regularly by the SENCO and any others involved. For further information please see our Inclusion and SEN policy. For further information please view our SEN Information Report on the website.

## **Equal opportunities**

At Stebbing Primary School we aim to ensure that all children have equality of opportunity and that no child is excluded or disadvantaged because of their faith, ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability. Different cultures and religions are celebrated as part of the EYFS framework and children whose first language is not English are given opportunities to develop their home language alongside learning English. The classroom has disabled access and a disabled toilet area.

## **Monitoring**

The Headteacher and classteacher are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the foundation stage provision. The class teacher also participates in termly cluster group moderations and will be moderated by an external moderator every 3 years. (Last moderation 2017)

## **Health and safety**

First aid: the main teacher is paediatric first aid trained until 2018 and other practitioners are first aid trained regularly. A first aid kit is kept in the classroom.

Environment: the classroom and outside area are regularly checked for any potential hazards to the children and are cleaned as appropriate.

Skin care: in hot weather parents are encouraged to provide sun cream, which the children apply themselves either before or during school. The AFSS kindly purchase sunhats for the pupils.

Clothing: the children wear the suitable school uniform with safe footwear. Suitable clothing for all weather conditions is provided by the school for both indoor and outdoor play.

Food and drink: fresh drinking water is constantly available in the classroom and children are encouraged to bring their own water bottles to consume throughout the day. A healthy snack is provided mid morning and is available in a clean area of the classroom designated for eating and drinking only.

Toileting: the children have a toilet and sink area that is accessible and cleaned daily. Spare clothing is available if necessary and a classroom practitioner deals with any accidents.

## **Professional development**

Practitioners are involved in all aspects of professional development, such as training and annual performance reviews.

## **Governor links**

At Stebbing Primary School we have an Early Years Foundation Stage Link Governor whom we meet with regularly both formally and informally. Reports are also given to the appropriate governor's committees throughout the year.

## **References**

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

[EARLY YEARS FRAMEWORK](#)

## **Links with other policies**

Teaching and learning

Inclusion and SEND

Handwriting

Homework

Transition

Equal opportunities

Health and Safety

Assessment