



Date: Summer 2021

Foundation Stage Policy

Watcombe Primary School



At Watcombe Primary School, the Early Years **Foundation Stage** begins when a child reaches the age of three and enters our Nursery, continuing until the end of the Reception year. We recognise it as a crucial stage in education, both in its own right and also in preparing children for future learning in Key Stage 1. We believe that all children should be given the best possible start to their education and therefore place great value on the quality of our provision in the Foundation Stage.

INTENT

We recognise that all children are individuals and are committed to supporting and nurturing the holistic learning and development of each child. We aim to:

- Establish and maintain positive partnerships with parents and carers, to support and enhance children's learning and development.
- Provide a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning to ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- Create a safe, stimulating and well-resourced indoor and outdoor learning environment, where children can make their own choices.
- Provide high quality, play based learning experiences both indoors and outdoors, which use children's interests and curiosities, to foster and develop their engagement, motivation and thinking.
- Promote positive attitudes to learning, including confidence, curiosity, independence and responsibility.
- Plan and deliver a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum which promotes the development of children's vocabulary, understanding, knowledge and skills, in all areas of learning and development, enabling them to achieve a good level of development at the end of the Foundation Stage.
- Provide a curriculum which takes account of, and responds to, children's individual developmental needs and allows them to make good progress in relation to their individual starting points.
- Develop children's skills in building positive relationships, managing their feelings and behaviour, taking care of their personal needs, and communicating with others.
- Observe and assess children's learning, and use this information to build on prior learning, inform child-adult interactions and planning, and monitor progress.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, other providers, professionals and outside agencies to meet the individual needs of children and families.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our core reference document is the „Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework“ (DFE, 2017/2018), which sets out the standards that school and childcare providers must meet for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five.

Our practice and provision is underpinned by the four principles:

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**.

Admission

Our school follows the Torbay Primary School Admission arrangements as set out in the annual admissions booklet given to the parents of prospective pupils in the Autumn Term.

To be allocated a place in the Reception class, parents need to apply to the Local Authority. Nursery places are allocated by the school in line with the Nursery Admissions Policy.

Parents are made aware that having a Nursery place does not guarantee a place in our Reception class, as it is a separate application process.

Appointments can be made to look around the school, prior to applying for a place or once a place has been allocated.

Induction

Before admission into the Nursery, parents will be invited to a „Welcome Meeting“ and children will have the opportunity to attend a „Stay and Play“ session with their parents. Staff will then carry out a home visit. This provides opportunities for:

1. Staff to meet parents and share information about the Nursery
2. Children to explore the environment with their parents before starting
3. Staff and parents to share and discuss any relevant information, and children to begin to build relationships and form attachments with staff

Before admission into the Reception class, a „Welcome Meeting“ will be held for parents to discuss arrangements for starting school. Children who have not attended the school nursery will have the opportunity to attend a „Stay and Play session“. Where applicable and with parental permission, staff will contact a child’s nursery setting and arrange to visit the child there. Home visits will be arranged if required.

Arrangements for children settling into our school are flexible, so that children are given enough time to feel secure in their new environment. Parental involvement is valued and welcomed with plenty of opportunities for co-operation and collaboration.

Staffing

Children in the Foundation Stage are taught by teachers with an Early Years qualification and/or experience. In addition, the classes have a Nursery Nurse and various support staff on a full/part time basis. We also welcome parental help in the classroom and on planned trips in the local area.

We believe strongly in the importance of keeping our practice up to date. We therefore ensure that all our staff working in the Foundation Stage attend courses and training on a regular basis as part of our School Professional Development Programme.

Accommodation

The Foundation Unit offers a bright, attractive and stimulating learning environment. Children are able to flow freely between the indoor classroom and a secure outdoor area, which has been thoughtfully designed to promote learning opportunities in the natural environment. The Nursery and Reception classes share the same learning environment and mix freely.

Our school works in partnership with Watcombe Children’s Centre Nursery based on the school site, and the outdoor area is shared with two year old children who attend this nursery.

The wider school environment is utilised to support children’s learning and development, with children in Nursery using the playground and hall as appropriate, and Reception using the main hall for P.E. lessons and our designated Forest School space for additional outdoor learning opportunities and experiences.

Resources

We offer a range of resources which provide for all areas of children’s learning and development in the Foundation Stage. These include:

- A good range of quality books (fiction and non-fiction)

- A variety of papers and tools/implements to make marks and write
- Sand and water with a variety of equipment
- Mathematical and scientific equipment
- Computers and technological toys e.g. remote-controlled cars
- Cooking equipment
- Growing and living things
- Artefacts and interesting objects to handle
- Small world toys and resources for imaginative play
- Resources to support children's role-play
- A variety of creative media such as paint, dough, clay, wood and recycled materials
- Small and large construction toys, including large blocks outdoors
- Musical instruments
- A variety of outdoor play equipment

We continually review our resources to ensure that they are:

- In a safe and clean condition for use.
- Suitable to meet the interests and learning and development needs of the children.
- Appropriate for all areas of learning.

Curriculum

Our curriculum reflects the three **prime** and four specific areas of learning and development:

1. **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
2. **Communication and Language**
3. **Physical Development**
4. Literacy
5. Maths
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

We know that the **prime areas** are crucial in laying the foundations for children's success in the specific areas, and as such, place a strong emphasis through our curriculum on developing positive relationships with others, the ability to manage feelings and behaviour, listening, attention and speaking skills (specifically vocabulary), and independence skills.

Weekly plans reflect children's interests and their individual/group learning and development needs. Though the individual areas of learning form the framework for our planning, we know that young children's learning is holistic, and recognise how one experience can help a child to develop a range of skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Early Learning Goals for each area of learning, establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some children in our school will exceed these goals and others will still be working towards them as they enter Year 1. The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a firm foundation for future learning in Key Stage 1.

We encourage parents to become actively involved in their children's learning by sharing curriculum information with them, and giving them opportunities to share information, experiences, thoughts, concerns and resources with us.

Learning and Teaching

We believe that our children learn best by being actively involved in activities and experiences which capture their interests, and build on what they understand, know and can do. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates, and reflect this in our teaching.

Teaching occurs through daily routines, planned activities and „in the moment“ opportunities. High-quality interactions between staff and children support and extend their learning, with staff using a variety of teaching strategies, including: modelling language and vocabulary; showing/demonstrating; explaining; exploring ideas; encouraging; open questioning; recalling; and facilitating.

We firmly believe that if a child is excited and motivated by learning, especially in the early days at our school, then we are already helping that child to become a lifelong learner.

Play

We recognise the importance of play in the Foundation Stage, through which children can:

- Actively explore and make sense of their world.
- Practise and build on ideas, concepts and skills.
- Try things out, take risks and make mistakes.
- Discover and make connections in their learning.
- Think about and solve problems.
- Relate to others.
- Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Learn self-control and understand the need for rules.
- Explore and express feelings in safe and controlled situations.

Planned and purposeful play activities, which take children's interests into account, are a key strategy for introducing and consolidating understanding, knowledge and skills in all areas of learning and development.

We ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to play through a balance of:

- **Child-initiated activities** (children making choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her own outcome for learning).
- **Adult-initiated activities** (staff providing the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning).
- **Adult-directed activities** (children engaging in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes).

Meeting Individual Needs

We provide a safe and supportive learning environment at our school where the contribution of all children is valued. We also employ a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's experiences, interests, skills and learning needs. In particular, we plan carefully to meet the needs of:

- Boys and girls.
- Children with special educational needs.
- Children with disabilities.
- Children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Children of different ethnic groups, including travellers and refugees.
- Children from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

In addition, we select our resources, equipment and materials thoughtfully, choosing those which positively reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

Partnership with Parents

We firmly believe that "parents are children's first and most enduring educators" (QCA Guidance) and we work hard to promote a successful partnership, with a two-way flow of knowledge, information and expertise.

This is achieved through:

- „Welcome Meetings“, „Stay and Play“ sessions and home visits prior to admission.
- An „open door“ policy where parents are encouraged to share information with staff and can stay and support their child to settle on arrival if necessary.
- Listening to parents' views and knowledge about their own child.
- Providing parents with clear information prior to children starting and throughout their time in the Foundation Stage (e.g. prospectus, policy, newsletters, blog, meetings).

- Encouraging and guiding parents and other family members as to how to support their child's learning (e.g. home learning challenges, sharing reading books, workshops, visits, celebrations).

IMPACT

The impact of our practice and provision is continually monitored and measured through a variety of practices.

Observation and Assessment

Our assessment of children's progress through the Foundation Stage is based on regular and close observations all staff make as they interact with children during child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-directed activities. This enables us to make professional judgements about how children are learning and what they have learnt. We involve all adults who come into contact with the child, such as other professionals, and regard parents as especially important in this respect.

We use a secure online program called „Tapestry“ to record, track and share children's unique interests, progress and achievements throughout the Foundation Stage, with all parents having secure access to an online learning journal for their child. This enables us to share information regularly with parents and provides them with the opportunity to contribute to the observation and assessment process, alongside our ongoing dialogue between home and school.

On entry to the Foundation Stage, we make initial assessments of what children already understand, know and can do. We track each child's progress against specific learning objectives and record significant achievements on a regular basis. At regular points in the year, we make summative assessments using Target Tracker. These assessments are closely monitored to identify individual and group learning needs which informs subsequent planning.

We encourage parents to be actively involved in supporting their children. During the school year, we hold Parent Meetings with an appointment system as well as opportunities for informal discussions between home and school.

In the summer term, at the end of the Foundation Stage, parents are given a written report to share information about their child's progress and achievements during the Reception year. Each child's attainment in relation to the Early learning Goals are summarized within the Foundation Stage Profile and data submitted to the Local Authority as part of statutory assessment.

Self-Evaluation and School Improvement

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is evaluated annually against the Ofsted criteria for outstanding practice and future actions identified. These actions, along with actions arising from whole school improvement priorities, are used to formulate an annual Foundation Stage Action Plan, which is monitored and reviewed throughout the year.

Governors

We have a designated Early Years Governor who meets termly with the Foundation Stage Leader and reports back to the Children and Curriculum Committee.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is monitored regularly by the Foundation Stage Leader and the Headteacher. It also forms part of our annual School Self Evaluation process and will therefore be incorporated into our School Development/Improvement Plan as appropriate.