

THAKEHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Small School, Big Opportunities, Great Achievements'



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Thakeham Primary School

Date approved by the Full Governing Body: January 31st 2022

Review Date: January 2025

Signed

Acting Headteacher: *Steph Lewis*

Chair of Governors: *Kate Nelson*

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in Reception (currently Acorn class).

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Our School Vision and The Statutory Framework for EYFS

At Thakeham Primary School we follow the Statutory Framework of the EYFS. Our School Vision encapsulates many of the key elements of this framework:

"High quality learning and teaching are at the heart of our school. We nurture and celebrate each child's **individual talents and skills** to enable them to be **happy, confident** and **resilient** individuals with a **passion for learning, inspired to achieve** their very best. Through encouraging a strong sense of **respect** and **responsibility**, both within our local **community** and the wider world, we support our children to be **co-operative, caring** citizens for the future."

The Statutory Framework for EYFS

There are four guiding principles that guide practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- 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
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- provide an engaging and balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the motivation for learning (see Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum section)
- promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- develop good relationships with individual children
- work in partnership with parents and with the wider community
- plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- provide a secure, safe and stimulating learning environment indoors and out

Foundation Stage Curriculum

We follow the Early Years Statutory Framework (September 2021). From this document we plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. The facilities, space and resources further support us in planning inspiring learning opportunities to meet the needs and interests of our pupils.

There are seven areas of learning and development that are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and make good progress.

These three areas are the **prime areas**:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they actively explore and think creatively. We aim for children to develop confidence, positive attitudes towards learning, good communication skills and physical development.

We write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics and children's interests, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. Please see our Curriculum Overview and Long/Medium Term Plans for more details. Underpinning all of our Curriculum Plans are 3 Curriculum Drivers that permeate our topics:

- My Place In the World
- Inspired Learners
- Learning for Life

Our short-term weekly planning is informed by our Curriculum Overview/Long Term Plans alongside our observations, which remain flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Children have whole class and small group times, which increase as they progress through the EYFS. There are times for a daily phonics session using 'Read Write Inc.', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is still delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS:

Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/914443/Development_Matters_-_Non-statutory_curriculum_guidance_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage_1.pdf

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact and skilfully intervene to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and consider these in our practice.

Our site enables us to create a wide range of stimulating environments with many opportunities to play and learn both inside and out.

Observation and Assessment

Alongside the previous setting's assessment of each pupil, we carry out the statutory Baseline assessment in the first 4 weeks of Reception Class as well as our own baseline assessments. Assessments are made of children through play, observations and short tasks. As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. EYFS staff keep an overview of children's interests, strengths and areas to be developed. We record our observations in both learning journals and online using 'Tapestry.' These observations are shared with children and parents at regular intervals. The observations inform staff of the next steps in the child's development. The next steps are updated and reviewed as needed.

We track pupil progress and attainment at 5 key points throughout the year (in line with descriptors) as part of our termly Pupil Progress meetings. This also provides an opportunity to identify appropriate support/next steps/enrichment to enable each child to fulfil their potential. We use government guidance as indicators of 'expected progress,' evidence of this will be seen in the online learning journals (Tapestry). Where attainment on entry is below age related expectation, we aim wherever possible for accelerated progress from the child's Baseline to try to diminish the gap between their learning and development and that expected for their age.

In the final term of the year the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG). Teachers must indicate whether children are emerging within the early learning goals or meeting expected levels of development

We provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG / Profile. We then allow opportunities for the parents to discuss these judgements with the teacher.

A child is deemed to have attained a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) if they have achieved expected

- the ELGs in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and;
- the ELGs in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

We encourage and welcome parent/carers to share their observations of their child's progress at home and use this evidence alongside staff observations, judgements and assessments.

Parents as Partners and the Wider Community

Parents as Partners

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 play in educating their children. Due to Covid 19 restrictions with parents coming into school, we are encouraging further support and parental engagement through Tapestry in addition to:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start in our school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting (telephone call) before their child starts school.
- Having good links with the local pre-schools that feed the intake into our Reception classes.
- A transition programme for both children and parents.
- The children having the opportunity to spend time with their keyworker / teacher and new learning environment before starting school.
- Sharing the children's learning and interests with parents and valuing the parents' 'voice'.
- Sharing and valuing the children's work and interests from out of school through class time and Celebration Assemblies.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and complete a 'Wow certificate'.

- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Fabulous Finishes, assemblies, Sports Day, Art Gallery, etc.;

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We actively encourage parents to participate in their child's education, and support them to develop confidence to help children with their learning—see our separate Homework policy.

Working with other professionals and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible; we will always consult parents on this first. We have good relationships with Thakeham Pre-School and other local Pre-Schools which supports transition work. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our school (with appropriate risk assessments in place).

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given, to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including pre-schools and nurseries.

This year, Reception class teachers visited each child's pre-school/nursery setting to meet with the child's key worker and observe the child in their setting this year. We also spoke in detail on the phone with key workers from all the pre-school and nurseries in order to begin to understand the child's academic, personal and social abilities and needs. Class teachers/ TA also carried out home doorstep visits to meet with the parents and children prior to their settling session in school. Children attended introductory sessions to Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Parents attended as part of this process for the first session. Following all the transition meetings and phone calls, parents were invited to a 'starting school meeting'.

Parent voice and knowledge of their child is valued highly by the Reception team and so parents were asked to complete an 'All about me' sheet to include any further information they felt the school need to know about their child. Please see our Pupil Transition Policy for further details.

Health & Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have clear policies, procedures and risk assessments in place to ensure children's safety. We are led by advice and guidance from DfE/PHE/WSCC regarding all matters pertaining to Covid-19 alongside the knowledge of our site characteristics, which influence our risk assessments and protocols. Our choice of resources and ensuring these are cleaned according to our school risk assessment are in line with DfE/PHE requirements.

We promote the good health of the children in our care by providing nutritious food and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Intimate Care, Medicines and First Aid.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Thakeham Primary School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. Please see our SEN&D and Most Able Pupil Policies.