

Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance

Introduction

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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE March 2017)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of Reception. In our school children can join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are four, and if we have places some children are able to join us the term after they turn three. Key Stage One begins for our children at the beginning of Year One. We believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is important in its own right and for preparing children for later schooling. It reflects the fact that children change and develop more rapidly in the first five years than at any other stage of their life.

In order to ensure continuity and to enable each child to reach their full potential, we make a clear commitment to ensuring that the transition between pre-school and Nursery and Reception is made smoothly, so laying secure foundations for future learning. The early years education we offer is based upon The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework leading to the Early Learning Goals, which establish targets for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

All children begin school with a variety of learning experiences from home and other settings. In their early years how children learn is as important as what children learn. Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage have to take on the challenging task of building on that learning and experience.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- 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; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage it is our aim to provide a rich learning environment with activities and experiences that offer all children the opportunities to develop a variety of competencies, skills and concepts across the three prime areas and four specific areas. The prime areas are fundamental throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and the specific areas grow out of these prime areas and provide important contexts for learning.

Prime areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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

We aim to provide a quality teaching and learning environment that is committed to raising standards and ensuring appropriate challenge for all children.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we realise that the way in which children engage with other people and their environment, underpins the learning and development across all areas. The characteristics of effective learning are:

- Playing and exploring – engagement
- Active Learning – motivation
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking

The three areas support the children to sustain their motivation and effectiveness as learners.

Mission Statement

At Atwood Primary Academy we undertake to:

- Ensure all children develop their full potential
- Promote strong links between home, school and the community
- Foster attitudes of mutual respect and responsibility
- Develop independent, confident, disciplined and enquiring learners, able to make informed choices
- Foster a love for learning
- Foster self-esteem and personal responsibility, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others

- Facilitate considerate and positive relationships between all members of the school community
- Lead the children towards compassion and respect for others, their needs and beliefs
- Make Atwood a secure and happy place for its pupils
- Promote a thoughtful attitude towards the immediate and wider environment
- Provide the children skills which will prove vital to them for life: skills of finding out, testing, reading, listening, recording and learning about making sense of their world
- Challenge each child to achieve the very best he or she can in academic, creative and physical activity
- Build up the child's self-confidence, self-esteem and self-discipline
- Encourage them towards a positivity and constructive approach to life with a sense of fun, curiosity and wonder in learning.

Unique Child

At Atwood Primary Academy 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 celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Equal Opportunities in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In accordance with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy all children within the Early Years Foundation Stage at Atwood Primary Academy must be given full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year, and some progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able and are gifted or talented, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

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." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage DfE March 2017)

At Atwood Primary Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. We understand that we are required to:

- Have and implement a child protection policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.
- Designate a member of staff to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within our setting.
- Train all staff to understand our safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- Have regard to the government's statutory guidance for 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' and to the 'Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2015'
- Have regard to the government's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018) statutory guidance.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure at least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings.
- Assign a key person to every child.
- Ensure staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.
- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Provide healthy, balanced and nutritious meals, snacks and drinks.
- Ensure there is a first aid box accessible at all times with appropriate content for use with children. Keep a written record of accidents or injuries and first aid treatment and inform parents and/or carers of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, of any first aid treatment given.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that we take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in our care are not exposed to risks and demonstrate how we are managing risks.
- Maintain records and obtain and share information to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Atwood Primary Academy 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.

Parents as Partners

“Parents are children’s first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings the results have a positive impact on the child’s development and learning. Therefore, each setting should seek to develop an effective partnership with parents.” (DfEE 2000)

Parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We believe that it is important that all early years practitioners work in close partnership with parents and other adults. When parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on a child’s development and learning. Valuing and building on children’s previous learning helps to promote these partnerships.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress;
- having an ‘open door’ policy;
- sharing each child’s learning journey through an online, secure system;
- encouraging parents to access, view and comment on their child’s learning journey regularly;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher if there are any concerns;
- inviting parents to a formal meeting for parents each term, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child’s progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child’s circumstances;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- encouraging the parents to take part in our Early Morning Challenges at the start of the school day in Reception;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents;
- encouraging parents to comment on progress in reading through the use of the reading contact book;
- encouraging parents to contribute to their child’s Early Years Foundation Stage Journey through home observation and commenting on their general progress on their online learning journey;

- inviting parents to curriculum evenings to discuss the kind of work that the children undertake in the reception class;
- inviting parents to phonics sessions to give guidance on how to support their child at home.

Enabling Environments

At Atwood Primary Academy we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms are 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 classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently.

Both the Nursery and Reception classes have their own enclosed outdoor areas and the children have free-flow access to these areas. 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 opportunities to explore using their senses, and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning and encourage a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Record Keeping and Assessment

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, as part of the learning and teaching process, we assess each child's development in relation to the Early Years Outcomes. These assessments are made on the basis of our accumulating observations and knowledge of the whole child. These observations are kept in the children's individual online Early Years Foundation Stage Learning Journey.

Through the Early Years Foundation Stage we use the age related expectations outlined in the Early Years Outcomes document to track individual achievements and set next steps in the children's learning. At the end of the Reception year each child's learning will be summarised and presented in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. The EYFS Profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). The profile will be shared with parents/carers and Year 1 teachers along with a summary of the child's skills in relation to the three key characteristics of learning (see page 4).

Learning and Development

At Atwood Primary Academy 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

The features of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- the fostering of a close partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school from the onset and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that our practitioners 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 achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- 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 regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all practitioners working within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Playing and Exploring - engagement

We believe well-planned play both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through play that is planned in a secure environment and with effective adult support, children can:

- explore, develop and represent learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world;
- practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;
- learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules;

- be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk and express their feelings;
- take risks and make mistakes;
- think creatively and imaginatively;
- communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems;
- express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

We aim to make learning for young children a rewarding and enjoyable experience during which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Active Learning - motivation

“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 satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Thinking Critically

“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, 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. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Role of the Early Years Leader

It is the role of the leader to promote, extend and enhance the Early Years provision through:

- establishing good relationships, encouraging good working practices and supporting and leading teachers in the Team, and throughout the school;
- leading, supporting, motivating and directing staff working within the Team;

- overseeing all aspects of the Team's organisation and management, including preparing agendas and chairing meetings, in order to ensure that school policies and practices are being delivered;
- evaluating pupils' progress, achievement and attainment, and report to the Senior Leadership Team;
- leading by example in all areas of the curriculum;
- monitoring the standards of behaviour and achievement within relevant areas;
- liaising closely with other Team leaders to ensure continuity and progression across the school;
- overseeing the induction process of new members of staff within the Team;
- liaising with Early Years settings to ensure support for children within the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- developing and promoting the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and progression with National Curriculum.

Staff development

The school is committed to identifying, developing and continuing the training needs of all staff which is reflected in our school development plan. This can take the form of INSET, whole school, specialised, in house and visiting specialists working alongside staff in their classes to learn a new skill.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is the responsibility of the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader and Reception and Nursery teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage; Mandy Lawrence will discuss Early Years Foundation Stage practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and Early Years Foundation Stage Leader will carry out monitoring on the Early Years Foundation Stage as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.