



*Aspiring to inspire others towards excellence, developing as individuals together in a distinctively Christian environment.*

1 Corinthians, 12:14 "For the body is not one member, but many".

## **Policy on the Early Years Foundation Stage**

**Reviewed: Autumn 2021**

**To be reviewed: Autumn 2022**

*Our mission as a church school is to be – loving, welcoming and succeeding with faith, family and friendship at the centre of all that we do. The key Christian values that are the core of our school life are forgiveness, creation, koinonia, reverence, service, wisdom, trust and endurance.*

### **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) extends from birth to five and is underpinned by the EYFS Statutory framework. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday). At Little Waltham C.E.V.A Primary School, we have one Reception class, 'Ash', offering a total of 30 places.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

### **The Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school follows the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the statutory aspects as well as other knowledge and skills to support children's personal development, prepare children for their next stage of education and develop the whole child. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3

areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

*The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:*

#### Communication and Language

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

#### Physical Development

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

#### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

*The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:*

#### Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word reading
- Writing

#### Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical patterns

#### Understanding the World

- Past and present
- People, culture and communities
- The natural world

#### Expressive Arts and Design

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

These are also underpinned by the characteristics of Effective Learning, as detailed in the framework.

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. Throughout the Reception year in our school, children have a short daily Mathematics-based session and a combined Communication and Language and Literacy-based session. The skills and understanding needed to progress into Year 1 are developed in a sensitive and practical way.

The indoor and outdoor experiences that our children meet enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across all areas of learning. The curriculum is creative and makes

links between several areas of learning wherever possible, all areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

Working towards the Early Learning Goals provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Our medium term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes for children. This is amended and developed as children contribute their own ideas and interests.

### **Teaching and Learning**

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on Teaching and Learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers;
- The good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

### **Continuous Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world, both indoors and outdoors. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules and boundaries. They are strongly encouraged to think creatively in collaboration with other children and independently, communicating with others as they investigate and solve problems. All play experiences are carefully structured and form an important part of the carefully planned curriculum, with children contributing their own ideas where possible.

### **Inclusion and Equal Opportunities**

At Little Waltham C.E.V.A. Primary School, we provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have an

additional need or disability. We ensure that every child is included and supported. Our ethos and curriculum educate children and they develop positive attitudes to diversity and difference. We have created a safe and inspiring place to learn, where all children are respected, included and not disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational need, disability, gender or ability. Our school Christian values are embedded into daily school life, giving all children the best chance to lead happy, healthy lives and to be responsible, active citizens.

*'The EYFS seeks to provide quality and consistency so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind. Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice ensures that every child is included and supported.'*

Statutory Framework for the EYFS (March 2021)

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress, and providing support (such as speech therapy), as necessary

### **Tapestry**

At Little Waltham C.E.V.A Primary School, we use an online system called Tapestry to record and store observations and assessments relating to each child. This is a safe and secure system and one that enables parents and carers to access their child's learning journey at any time. Parents and carers can share it with their child, family and friends at home and also post any comments and photographs of their own, helping to create a fully holistic view of the child and strengthen the parent partnership.

### **Observation, Assessment and Reporting**

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts** Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) and the schools own baseline assessment. The observations along with the transitional documents from Nursery and information collected from parents are used as the starting point for future learning. Ongoing assessment of children's learning enables us to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support. Assessment is seen as an integral part of the learning and development process. Through observations, the class teacher and supporting adults identify the children's achievements, interests, learning styles. The next steps for learning can be identified and any misconceptions addressed. Evidence of progress and achievements are kept in the form of digital observations, photographs and the children's work. Significant achievements are collated in the children's 'Learning Journeys'. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. Children's attainment is recorded on the digital learning journey platform, Tapestry. This is used to monitor and track progress; allowing us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of

children. We share the information contained in the Foundation Stage Profile at our parental consultation meetings.

Parents and carers receive an annual report commenting on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents and carers in early July each year.

At the end of the Reception, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. Children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance and our own in school curriculum documents) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements.

Final assessments against the Foundation Stage Profile are reported to the Local Authority as requested. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead and we share this information at parental consultation meetings.

### **Working with Parents and Carers**

At Little Waltham C.E.V.A., we recognise and value the importance of working together with parents and carers to support children's learning, development and well-being.

*'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 EYFS (March 2021)

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents or carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- Visits by the teacher to all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- Inviting all parents and carers to an induction afternoon during the term before their child starts school;
- Offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- Encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- Having flexible admission arrangements, and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- Arranging for children to start school over the first three weeks of term, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school;
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;

- Providing various activities that involve parents and carers, i.e. regular communication with home through the child's home school book, and inviting parents and carers to curriculum evenings, in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking;
- There is a formal meeting for parents and carers each term, at which the parents/carers discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents and carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.

### **Resources**

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages 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.

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is monitored by the governing body, and will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.