



Curriculum Overview: Early Years Foundation Stage

Intent

Our curriculum is unique because of our historical and geographical location, as well as the wonderful natural environment in and around the school. These enhance and drive our curriculum. Although we are socially diverse, we are not culturally diverse. We want to develop our curriculum to increasingly extend our pupils' horizons and help them to know about and understand that the village of Stratford-Sub-Castle, the city of Salisbury and the county of Wiltshire are part of a much, much bigger world. A world, which is ever more connected and interconnected.

At Stratford-sub-Castle school we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is crucial in securing solid foundations that children are going to continue to build upon. It is our intent that the children who enter our EYFS develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning. We believe that all children deserve to be valued as an individual and we are passionate in allowing all children to achieve their full, unique potential. The ability to learn is underpinned by the teaching of basic skills, knowledge, concepts and values. We constantly provide enhancement opportunities to engage inquisitive minds and believe that childhood should be a happy, investigative and enquiring time in our lives where there are no limits to curiosity and there is a thirst for new experiences and knowledge.

Our EYFS curriculum is designed to promote:

- **ACTIVE LEARNING:** recognise children's prior learning and provide first-hand experiences and opportunities to express imagination and curiosity
- **INDEPENDENT LEARNING:** access to a range of resources and responsibility taken for children's own learning; to develop and extend their own interests
- **POSITIVE LEARNING SKILLS:** children are engaged, excited and proud of their learning; they develop resilience and self-confidence to become creative, critical thinkers.
- **CHOICE AND RISK TAKING:** opportunities for children to take their learning in any direction, to be supported to consider how a task can be achieved and what they will need to do
- **COMMUNICATION:** the development of social skills and opportunities to work individually or collaboratively to develop interpersonal skills,
- **REFLECTION:** children set themselves next steps to help them progress and can reflect on the quality of their work, evaluating and adapting in the moment
- **CONSOLIDATION:** opportunities for knowledge and skills to be consolidated and explored independently in a variety of ways.

Our curriculum embraces the community in which it is situated, recognising local history, heritage, geographical situation and most importantly, the aspirations of all our children. We place strong emphasis on the religious, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our pupils. Our school community has identified a clear set of values that underpin developing 'Life in all its Fullness' for all members of our school family. At Stratford-Sub-Castle school we intend to model and develop positive and trusting relationships with all children, ensuring that every child is recognised as a unique individual.

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Implementation

We begin each new year by looking at the individual needs of our children and - taking into account, their different starting points– we carefully develop our flexible EYFS curriculum which enables children to follow the path of their learning journey, at a point that is suitable for their unique needs, stage of development and interests.

The teaching of the EYFS areas of learning is practical and playful with support and challenge from adults in class sessions. There is a combination of adult-led and teacher taught sessions as well as a wealth of stimulating continuous provision opportunities for child-initiated learning. Throughout all of these areas of learning and at the heart of the EYFS curriculum are the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We strive to develop these key characteristics of 'Playing and Learning', 'Active Learning' and 'Thinking Critically' in order to give children the skills that they will continue to draw upon throughout their development.

All of the crucial skills, knowledge and vocabulary that we teach are presented to the children throughout the year through a range of topics, which are designed with children's interests in mind. A vital part of the curriculum design including the topics we teach, is flexibility, as this enables us to change if a specific interest changes and a new one arises. Our learning environments both inside and outside play an important role in our curriculum implementation. We adapt our environments regularly to meet the different and developing needs of our children. We aim to ensure these areas are always stimulating and exciting and that, importantly they are accessible to all children regardless of where they are on their learning journey. The environments are designed to promote independence within our children and allow them to access the curriculum independently and confidently with the necessary level of support and challenge.

Within our EYFS Curriculum, children are assessed through accurate and important observations. These provide us with information for future planning for individual children's next steps in their learning. They enable us as EYFS practitioners to ensure learning is embedded and consistent and that all children continue to make outstanding progress within our setting.

There are seven key features of effective practice (outlined in the Development Matters Document 2021) are:

1. The best for every child
2. High-quality care
3. The curriculum; what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnerships with parents

There are four overarching principles that should shape practice in all early years settings. These are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

All areas of the EYFS curriculum are followed and planned for to ensure there is a broad, balanced and progressive learning environment and curriculum. The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through the seven areas in the EYFS curriculum:

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

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

These 7 areas are used to plan children's learning and activities. Planning for this curriculum is designed to be flexible so that a child's unique needs and interests are supported. We ensure activities support the Characteristics of Effective Learning to ensure learning takes place.

These are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Each half termly topic is enhanced through a variety of first-hand experiences (visits and visitors). These give all of the children a shared experience through which to explore and develop language, knowledge and skills. Daily guided activities are set up and planned to cover different areas of the EYFS curriculum and allow children to develop their next steps in learning. We introduce new concepts and knowledge which is continued and enhanced through enabling environments and continuous provision.

Our carefully planned environment allows children to access a range of stimulating and engaging activities independently through child-initiated play. Through 'Planning in the Moment' we will extend play, plan next steps and facilitate next steps for spontaneous learning opportunities. Where possible the children's own interests are used by the adults to engage the children in higher level thinking and deeper learning. Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside. Our outdoor areas are used all year round and in all weather conditions!

Evidence in children's Learning Journeys support all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Class teachers use observations to make formative assessments which inform future planning and ensure that all children build on their current knowledge and skills at a good pace. Summative assessment checks children's attainment is on track and ensures rates of progress are at least good for all children, including vulnerable groups such as those with SEND or who are disadvantaged. Assessment judgements are moderated both in school and externally with local schools. Experienced staff undertake moderator training through the LA which helps validate school judgements. The level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the early learning goals (ELGs)

We value parental involvement and every effort is made to inform them of the EYFS curriculum whilst providing them with the tools to continue in school learning at home. Parents are also encouraged to inform school of their child's interests and achievements (wow moments) at home as these are an essential part of each child's learning journey. Strategies to include and inform parents include, Caterpillar 'Stay and Play' induction sessions, Reading/Phonics Workshops, Learning Journey Review Sessions, Reading Records, 'Friday Celebration Assemblies'.

Impact

The impact of our EYFS Curriculum is that all children make good progress from their individual varied starting points. All children get the best possible start to their school life and develop the knowledge, skills and solid foundations to support them with the transition to KS1 and beyond. With the successful implementation of both an enriched, rounded and balanced curriculum and a well-structured, safe, active and challenging learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, children will be able to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that enables them to be successful learners. Children will be actively engaged in learning and their enjoyment of this learning will be apparent to all. All children will have experienced a curriculum that provides, exciting and enriching learning experiences and opportunities for children to learn through educational visits and hands on experiences. Children will more fully appreciate and understand the world around them, experiencing and learning about different cultures, music, dance, art and history.

Children will actively ask questions about the world around them and their learning experiences and they will never fear making a mistake but instead see this as an opportunity to learn. They will be able to make links with their learning develop their skills as they are able to use and apply skills learnt within their learning across the curriculum. Children will also be skillful at solving problems and they will have effectively developed their personal levels of resilience and independent learning skills. They will be successful learners and fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they transition from Foundation Stage to Year One. We will also aim to help children to make sense of the world around them, to develop tolerance, compassion and an understanding of their rights and the rights of others in an ever-evolving world. Children at Stratford-sub-Castle school will be well rounded, happy, inquisitive and successful learners. They develop and nurture strong, positive attitudes where they become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment.

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage the majority of children will have reached their personal best and have achieved outstanding progress. Aiming for a good level of development measure (GLD). They will have achieved the expected level in the ELGs across the Prime Areas of Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and in the Specific Areas of Literacy and Mathematics. All children will have made significant personal progress across all areas of learning. Children at the end of Foundation stage will have developed essential knowledge and skills required for everyday life and lifelong learning.