

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

**September 2023**

## **Tackley Church of England Primary School**



Our vision for Tackley CE Primary School reflects our commitment to create a school where everyone is important and valued as members of our school and local community. This vision is achieved through our values of curiosity, kindness and responsibility.

These values help us to make good choices about how we lead our lives, and means that we all contribute to our enriched curriculum which places an importance on life beyond the classroom. In school we relate the importance of each individual as a valuable member of our community to the Parable of the Lost Sheep where everyone is included, and everyone is important and valued.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### Aim

At Tackley School we greatly value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life. We aim to make a significant contribution to that start by helping young children to develop a love for learning which they will carry with them through life.

At Tackley School, we will:

- Provide children with a happy and vibrant foundation which fosters a love of learning.
- Offer stimulating and inspiring provision where children feel safe and secure enough to take risks within their learning and play.
- Offer an enriched curriculum providing children with a wide range of new and exciting experiences.
- Encourage children to develop independence within a nurtured environment.
- Follow the principles of, learning without limits, where the highest expectations for all the children are held and promoted, providing them with an unlimited opportunity for development.
- Develop the children's social and emotional wellbeing through our school values-based curriculum.

### Curriculum Intent

We provide an **engaging, inspiring** and **responsive** Early Years curriculum which gives children the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to reach their full potential from a range of different starting points.

Our Early Years curriculum has been designed to enable children to develop through interactive and immersive learning experiences. We understand that children learn best when they are absorbed, interested and active.

We believe that it is our role to lay the vital foundations for children in Early Years, to provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life. Due to this, we place a particular emphasis on the prime areas of development:

- personal, social, emotional, physical development
- communication and language skills

It is essential that children can develop in these areas at their own pace with the support of a nurturing and caring environment. Children flourish with warm, strong and positive partnerships between children and staff. This dedicated time to their overall development and wellbeing gives children the tools to access the more specific areas of the curriculum, and flourish throughout their school journey.

We believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and therefore, we are proud that our EYFS setting has an underlying ethos of 'learning through play'. Play is essential for children's development across all areas. Play builds on children's confidence as they learn to explore, to relate to others around them and develop relationships, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

At Tackley we also place a particular emphasis on the specific area of Literacy. We recognise that Literacy skills not only improve academic outcomes, but are life skills to ensure success beyond school. Oracy, reading and writing help develop children's thinking and understanding, which in turn promotes self-confidence, resilience and empathy to support a child's well-being.

Our enabling learning environment and high-quality adult interactions support the children as they begin to learn through play right from the start of their educational journey. We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking. We follow children's interests and ideas to foster a lifelong love of learning both in and outside of school.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1.

As a whole school, these are our **3 core values**

- **Being kind:** In Early Years children develop the skills to build positive relationships and treat everyone with kindness.
- **Being curious:** In Early Years children are continually engaging in open-ended, practical learning experiences through play, encouraging them to explore the world around them.
- **Being responsible:** In Early Years children are encouraged to become independent and responsible learners, actively seeking out opportunities to learn and grow.

## **Our Setting**

Our EYFS setting covers both Nursery (aged 3-4) and Reception (aged 4-5) year groups. All children join our school with a wide variety of experiences and the adults working within the setting build upon that prior learning experience. This is achieved through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents, carers and the Early Years team work effectively together to support the learning and development of each child.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child.
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments.
- Learning and development.

### **The Unique Child**

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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- following the children's interest and planning to further develop their learning through supporting and extending their individual interests.
- observing children's play and learning and recording observations in Learning Journals.

### **Inclusion**

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and in challenging stereotypical attitudes.

## **Welfare**

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. We aim to ensure that all children feel happy, safe and secure through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers.

At Tackley Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in Section 3 of Statutory Requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023).

## **Positive Relationships and Partnership with Parents**

We support children in our EYFS to build secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful relationships with children and their families. We understand the importance of working closely with parents and carers to support the development of every child within our setting. We open our doors from 8.30-8.45am each morning, offering a soft start for families to arrive, talk to staff and settle their child for the day ahead. We encourage informal discussion between parents, and the practitioners within the setting, in order to ensure a complete picture of each child's learning and development.

Parents will be informed of their child's progress regularly throughout the year. This will include parent evenings, in which you will be updated in detail on your child's progress across each area of the curriculum. Reception parents will also receive information at the start of the year from their baseline assessments, and at the end of the academic year when they are assessed against the Early Learning Goals.

We track progress and achievements in Learning Journals which parents are welcome to look through when they drop their child off in the morning. Parents are also encouraged to share achievements which have happened outside of school using our 'wow moments'. We share and display these achievements at school so that they can be celebrated further.

## **An Enabling Environment**

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure and challenged. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and engaging activities and experiences to extend learning.

The Early Years setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely, both in the classroom and in our outside space. Our indoor and outdoor learning environment is set up into different areas where children can access their own resources independently.

## **The Curriculum**

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, 2023.

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 viewed 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 are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The EYFS also includes the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout Reception where staff are continuously promoting the development of these skills. The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring:** children investigate and experience the environment and what is happening around them and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning:** children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** children create and develop their own ideas, make links between different experiences and develop strategies for choosing their own ways to do things

### **Teaching and Learning**

Each half term, EYFS staff introduce a new theme to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. The themes selected ensure that the children receive a balanced and broad curriculum, including exciting enrichment activities and plenty of room for interest-led themes to be focused on too. The themes ensure that the children have the opportunities throughout the year to meet all of their age-related objectives and to make a good level of progress.

Children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. The learning is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching during the day, followed by long periods of free flow play. This is adapted and changed throughout the year to take into consideration the changing needs of the children. Directed teaching sessions are often followed by focused adult activities in small groups. This allows the teacher to check for understanding,

identify any misconceptions in their learning and respond with verbal feedback or target misconceived learning. During free flow play, children are provided with plenty of time to 'get busy' and explore the provision, indoors and outdoors. Children have full access to all areas, whatever the weather and they can choose what they would like to engage with. All areas of learning are carefully planned by the adults to address children's misconceptions, build upon previous learning and challenge the children to achieve their next steps. As the children play the adults are constantly observing to find the teachable moments, where they can intervene and extend the learning opportunities for the children; offering comments, suggestions, modelling language, introducing new ideas, demonstrating skills and scribing children's ideas.

### **English and Literacy**

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to encourage a love of reading right from the start. In EYFS we have carefully selected, focused stories each term. The aim is to expose children to a range of books that not only develop a love of reading, but have been chosen specifically to develop their oracy, vocabulary and comprehension. These books will be embedded in our provision through activities, story sessions and on display for children to access independently. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories.

There is cohesion and consistency with our approach to align with the whole school Literacy Curriculum that is followed from Years 1-6:

- The inclusion of high-quality texts which are age and stage appropriate
- Modelled reading and re-telling opportunities across each session
- Structured comprehensions questions
- A focus on vocabulary
- Daily phonics sessions
- Collaborative learning behaviours which develop oracy and interdependence

### **Phonics**

In Nursery, children start to develop their phonemic awareness through speaking and listening activities. This stage involves getting children attuned to the sounds around them and ready to begin oral blending and segmenting skills. By the end of nursery, children should be ready to participate in daily phonics sessions and begin learning and applying single letter sounds to their literacy skills.

In Reception, children participate in daily phonics sessions. We follow the Read Write Inc (RWI) programme to ensure consistency across the school. Children will begin to develop grapheme-phoneme correspondence, as set sounds are introduced throughout the year. Children will develop their skills in segmenting and blending these sounds to decode words and read sentences. We encourage children to read at home daily with an adult and we listen to children read regularly at school. They are given books that match their current phonic knowledge in order to apply their learning and become more confident and fluent in their reading.

Children will begin applying their phonic knowledge to their writing, spelling words and forming sentences during Reception. Children have opportunities to apply their knowledge throughout free flow play, with reading and writing resources available to support them through continuous and enhanced provision. The structure and progression of Read, Write Inc, supported by the clear and consistent reading and writing opportunities in our provision, provide Reception children with the knowledge and skills to meet the Early Learning Goals for Literacy.

### **Mathematics**

In Nursery, children develop a love of Maths through games, songs, rhymes, and play using concrete manipulatives. There is a focus each term for the children: shape, positional language, patterns, numerals, counting and subitising. Children explore each focus area through child-initiated and adult-initiated activities.

In Reception, we follow the White Rose Maths Scheme of work. Children participate in daily Maths sessions. Pupils learn through activities using concrete manipulatives and pictorial representations which are then applied further within their own child-led exploration. Learning is carefully structured to ensure progression towards the Early Learning Goals for Mathematics.

### **Wider Curriculum**

Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; 'Understanding of the World' and 'Expressive Arts and Design.' These areas are essential to our curriculum and underpin our core curriculum values: being curious, being creative, being independent. We strive to provide children with exciting, purposeful, enquiry-based activities for children to develop their natural curiosity and explore the world around them. Children have access to our EYFS outdoor area, which is carefully planned to provide children with further opportunities to apply and extend their learning. In addition, children visit our Forest School every week.

### **Assessment**

Adults continuously assess children during their play within the setting. Significant observations of children's development are recorded through written notes or photographs and kept in Learning Journals. Summative assessments are recorded at the end of terms two, four and six and an entry baseline assessment is recorded within the first few weeks of children's entry into either Nursery or Reception. This enables the children's progress to be monitored, and teaching to be tailored, to individual children and their specific needs at the time. Regular RWI phonics assessments are carried out in line with the RWI phonics programme to ensure progress, and that children are working at the correct ability level.

### **In the Moment Cycle**

The revised framework for Early Years (2023) has a greater focus on high quality interactions between adults and children. This means our Early Years staff dedicate their time to being 'in the moment' with the children, engaging and extending learning experiences. Adults record significant observations of play, including misconceptions or next steps that have been achieved by children. Our 'in the moment' cycle ensures that staff are continually observing, assessing, reflecting and



adapting. Our planning and environment is then based around the observations we make, including children's interests or areas for development. Significant observations are shared between the Early Years team during weekly team meetings.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

As in all parts of the school we ensure appropriate time and resources are accessed for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils by using the pupil premium fund to close the gaps identified in children's learning and development.

### **Health and Safety**

At Tackley Primary School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, a daily assessment is made of the outdoor area.

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- The classroom has a snack and sink area that can provide healthy snacks and drinks.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept (see accident and injury policy). At least one member of staff in the setting has a Paediatric First Aid qualification
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- Staff are not permitted to take photographs or videos with personal mobile phones or cameras.
- Staff are expected to wear appropriate clothing that supports them playing and engaging with children at floor level.

### **Transition from Pre-school or other providers**

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about school procedures.
- During the Summer term parents are asked to complete an "All about me" booklet. It is used during the Autumn term to support transition and to inform planning.
- The children are invited to three separate visits to their Reception class.
- Children are assigned a key adult to support them with their transition.

### **From Reception to Year 1**

The Key Stage One staff and Early Years staff work closely together to ensure effective transition from the Reception year into Year One. The Year One teacher visits the Reception children within their classroom in order to join in with their play and build relationships. The Reception and Year One teacher meet together to discuss the Reception children individually, looking at specific learning and development for each child. In the summer term the Reception children have a transition morning in their new class. For at least the first half term the children join Year One there is close involvement with the Early Years setting.

### **Role of the Governing Body**

As part of their overall responsibilities, the Governing Body will ensure that the school complies with its duty to teach the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, The National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. The Governing Body does this by:

- Monitoring information and data about the Foundation Stage
- Monitoring the effectiveness of Foundation Stage teaching

### **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is a working document. Therefore, it is open to change and restructure as and when appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Early Years Lead.

### **Relevant Policies and Documentation**

This policy should be read in conjunction with these documents:

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2023
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Forest School Policy
- Personal and Intimate Care Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Administering Medicine Policy

**Madeleine Freeman**

**September 2023**