

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

Tewkesbury C of E Primary School & Pre-School



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Where the terms 'organisation' or 'school' are used throughout this policy, they include Tewkesbury C of E School and Tewkesbury C of E Pre-School. They also include the school's own extended services of Breakfast Club and Afterschool Club.

Contents

1. Aims	32. Welfare	33. The Curriculum	54. Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning
65. Assessment	66. Our Partnership with Parents/Carers:		7

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‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.’

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021)

1. Aims

At Tewkesbury Church of England Primary and Pre-school, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential and shine. We understand that children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s early experiences have a major impact on their future life chances. This is a crucial time for developing their enjoyment of learning, their engagement and motivation.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum which builds on children’s interests and experiences, giving them the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child is left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents/carers, valuing their contributions
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (September 2021). We have high expectations of all children and we encourage them to develop independence throughout their time in Early Years. We are committed to providing high quality care and we use the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation to set the standards for promoting learning, development and safety of children from 2 to 5 years.

The EYFS Framework identifies **four guiding principles** which we use to shape our practice in school:

- every child is a **unique child** (cultural capital), who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, educated citizens who are self-assured and ready for life-long learning
- 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/carers
- children **develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

2. 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 EYFS 2021)

At Tewkesbury C of E, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and these are met through our existing school policies.

Structure of Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Lead oversees the Early Years Foundation Stage at Tewkesbury C of E Primary and Pre-school and has allocated time dedicated to this element of their role.

In Pre-school our lead key practitioner works in partnership with the Pre School Lead and alongside three other key practitioners on a daily basis to support the children in their time at our setting.

Each child has a Key Practitioner who is responsible for ensuring the learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. They will adapt the learning to suit their children's needs and will be aware of their next steps. However, all staff are responsible for the well-being and safety of all children and are part of every child's learning journey.

The Oak group (3 – 4 year olds, pre-school age) operate solely in the main Pre-school room during the morning before the Acorn group join them for the afternoon session. Our Acorn group of children (2 – 3 year olds) have a separate environment for the morning sessions so that we can meet the needs of all children more closely. They share the outdoor learning spaces throughout the day.

Settling in

Staff will work closely with parents/carers to help children adapt to the Pre-School routine and an induction process is planned to meet the needs of the child. Pre-school parents/carers are invited to a 1:1 meeting and tour of the setting with the lead practitioner prior to them starting. This provides an opportunity to gather information on the child before they start at Pre-school and allows parents/carers to ask any questions they may have.

The children are invited to a one-hour induction session with parents/carers where they can use the time to explore the setting. A second, one-hour session is then planned in where they attend by themselves. However, in discussion with parents/carers we are guided by doing what is right for each child on an individual basis and the needs of each child.

How are they taught?

The children are taught in whole-class sessions, small groups or 1:1. The learning can also be spontaneous and child led, through their interests. Learning is fun, practical and developmentally appropriate. Outdoor learning is fundamental to children's learning so they have access to the outdoor area both in the mornings and afternoons through free-flow. The adult's role is to model language, support their play and provide new opportunities/experiences.

Reception

In Reception, the children are organised into classes depending on the number on roll. The class/es will have one teacher and a full-time teaching assistant over the duration of a week. PPA will be provided by a consistent PPA teacher who is known by the children.

Settling in

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

In June /July time, children are invited to an induction session to meet their teacher and see the classroom. A Welcome Meeting (virtual or in person) will take place where parents/carers will find out about the uniform, school day, curriculum and school expectations.

The EYFS lead will contact Pre-school settings across the locality to have a professional conversation and to gather information on the children and their specific needs. Where possible the Reception teachers will visit Pre-school settings to meet and observe children in their settings. Pre-schools will also send to school,

‘Moving On’ transition documents that the teachers will use to collect information on the children, their friendship groups and their specific needs.

In September, parents/carers are invited to a 1:1 meeting along with their child to meet their new teacher and familiarise themselves with their classroom environment. This provides an opportunity for staff to gather information on the child before they start school and allows parents/carers to ask any questions they may have. Once these meetings have been completed the children build up to a full day time-table, beginning with just mornings or afternoons, then with lunches and finally all day.

When children transition into Year 1 the Reception teacher has time with the Year 1 teacher to give them all the relevant welfare, academic and general information about all the children leaving the EYFS. The children take part in a transition day in the final part of the summer term where they ‘move up’ to spend the day in Year 1 and get to know their new teacher. They spend the day in their new classroom so they can also explore their new classroom environment too. Over the year, the Year 1 teaching team take lots of opportunities to build relationships with the children in EYFS so that they are already familiar adults to the children.

How are they taught?

We teach through a range of teaching methods including child-initiated learning, whole class teaching, group teaching, investigations and problem solving together, and independently. As many activities as possible are play-based; however, there is also a need for direct teacher-led activities to ensure children gain essential knowledge and skills from their teacher. All activities are expertly modelled and children are given sufficient time, support and resources to repeat and practise them.

3. The Curriculum

Our EYFS curriculum has been written in accordance with the latest version of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (September 2021). Our curriculum is ambitious and aims to teach all children the skills and knowledge in order that they reach the seventeen Early Learning Goals described in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are important and interconnected. The first three areas in the list below, 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. There are also four specific areas, through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Prime Areas:

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

Specific areas:

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

We recognise the importance of developing children’s **communication and language** skills and have given them a high priority within our school. As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework 2021:

“The development of children’s spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children’s back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or

doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively."

Phonics is taught across EYFS and Key Stage 1 currently using Unlocking Letters and Sounds which meets the DfE requirements. In KS2 Unlocking Letters and Sound phonic interventions are used for children who require further support.

We underpin our curriculum with the Personal Social and Emotional Development of all our children. We strive to enable children to be safe, happy, confident individuals. We also encourage self-regulation as much as possible and introduce rules and boundaries through modelling good behaviour and reflection time following our school's restorative practice in line with our school behaviour policy. As adults we recognise that developing strong, warm and supportive relationships with all children in our setting is crucial in enabling them to understand their own feelings and those of others.

Our curriculum for EYFS is based around cross-curricular topics. Each topic planned is included in the curriculum for specific reasons and we want to prepare the children for when they leave the Reception Year ready to start the KS1 curriculum. All the topics have resources and activities ready to use in the enhanced provision. Topics are introduced with a good quality storybook or age-appropriate non-fiction text. Using books in this way teaches children that books and reading form the basis of all learning. We aim to teach children to develop a love of books as soon as they arrive at Tewkesbury C of E and books are used to enhance our whole curriculum.

4. Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at Tewkesbury C of E are three **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**:

- **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.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

5. Assessment

In Pre-school:

During the first term of a child joining Pre-school the key practitioner will gather information through observations to help build a picture of where the child is for their baseline assessment. Observations and assessment of each individual pupil is on-going with the information gained being used to ensure that planning and the environment reflects identified needs.

At the appropriate age, there will be 2-year-old progress checks and this information will be formally shared with parents/carers.

In Reception:

During the first term in Reception, the teacher carries out the Reception Baseline Assessments (RBA) for each child. Information about the RBA can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reception-baseline> . These can be used to inform teaching within the first term.

Children will be judged at either an emerging level or an expected level in each early learning goal. The exceeding level no longer applies. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher, teaching assistants, parents/carers and children, as appropriate.

We record each child's level of development throughout the year. At the end of the final term in Reception we assess whether each child is emerging or expected in each strand within each area of learning and submit this data to the local authority. This information is also shared with the child's next teacher who uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too in the end-of-year report for parents/carers.

Parents/carers receive an annual written report that offers detailed comments on each child's holistic progress across all areas 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/carers in early July each year.

6. Our Partnership with Parents/Carers:

You are your child's first educator and we recognise that you know your child best. We pride ourselves on our strong links with parents/carers within our Early Years Foundation Stage and recognise the importance of clear lines of communication between staff and parents/carers. When these partnerships are developed it allows us to work together, which has a powerful impact on children's learning and development in school. We operate an 'open-door' policy within our EYFS and value our links with parents/carers creating strong communication between school and home. Conversely, if EYFS staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will approach parents/carers to discuss them.

If you feel there is any information that is important to the wellbeing of your child or may help us to support your child further then please do let us know.

At Tewkesbury C of E, we use Tapestry, an online learning journal, as a way of recording a child's learning and achievements in EYFS. One of the many advantages to using this system is the ability to share each child's learning journal with parents/carers at home where they can instantly add their own comments to entries, and show their child's online book to members of the family. We encourage all parents/carers to capture some of their child's 'wow' moments at home and share them with us. This allows us to build up a holistic picture of each child's development.

We will invite parents/carers to phonic and reading and maths workshops/stay and play sessions to see how their children will begin learning and how they can support them. We will also provide written contact through reading records and letters that are sent home.

In Reception we offer two, parent/carer-teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress and wellbeing is discussed.