

Early Years Policy



Date	Autumn 2023
Review Date	Autumn 2024

Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. We believe that every child has the right to a well-planned and meaningful curriculum that will provide them with the tools needed to succeed throughout their lives, regardless of culture, social class, gender, physical and cognitive capabilities and beliefs.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Friarage County Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS department.

The Foundation Stage comprises of 1 Nursery class (Providing 15hrs or 30hrs across morning and afternoon sessions) and two Reception classes (45 places in total). Nursery and Reception children learn as a team to ensure continuity of provision and progression across the Foundation Stage.

EYFS Staff

Mrs Penny Carver– Reception Class teacher & EYFS Lead

Mrs Caroline O’Keeffe – Reception Class teacher

Mrs Rachel Sellers – Nursey Lead HLTA

Mrs Helen McFegan – Advanced Teaching Assistant

Miss Charlotte Totten – Advanced Teaching Assistant

Miss Molly Sheader –Advanced Teaching Assistant

Intent – What do we want to achieve?						
The unique child	Positive relationships		Enabling Environments		Learning and Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To value every child as an individual and celebrate and respect differences within our diverse school community. To work closely and collaboratively with parents to develop a true reflection of the whole child. To create a happy, safe, and nurturing environment where children develop their independence as learners. To create an environment where children develop resilience, friendships, and positive relationships. To provide a curriculum which is exciting and motivates children to love learning. To provide a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment where children take risks and challenge their own learning. To ensure that learning is accessible for all, and that children's individual progress is valued. To provide children with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for the challenges beyond EYFS. 						
Implementation – How do we achieve this?						
Supportive, trusting relationships.	High quality interactions	Setting high expectations for all.	A Language Rich Environment	A balance of child-initiated and adult directed learning	Assessment that serves children's learning	
EYFS Framework – inc. Characteristics of Effective Learning						
Playing & Exploring		Active Learning			Creating & Thinking Critically	
Communication & Language	Personal, Social & Emotional	Physical Dev	Literacy	Maths	Understanding of the World	Creating with Materials
Our Approaches to Learning						
High Quality Adaptive Teaching		Play Based Pedagogy		Experiences linked to Friarage 15		Parents as Partners
Communication & Language				Personal, Social & Emotional Skills		
Vocabulary Focus		Helicopter Stories	Poetry Basket	Talk Through Stories	Promoting independence	Emotion Coaching
Literacy				Mathematics		Physical Development
Fantastic 5 Books	Read Write Inc Phonics	Drawing Club	Squiggle while you wiggle	White Rose Maths	Jungle Journey	Complete PE
Additional Support						
Speech and Language Support		EAL Focus Groups		Individualized Learning Plans		Working with external agencies
Impact – How we know we are achieving?						
Practitioner Knowledge		Baseline Assessment		Formative Assessment		Summative Assessments
3 Weekly RWI Assessment		IPM Reviews		Diagnostic Assessments		Parental Meetings
Local moderation meetings		Collaboration with Year 1		Children are happy, resilient learners who are keen to learn, proud of their achievements and achieve their potential.		

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021

In 2020 we were Early Adopters of the new EYFS framework, which became statutory in September 2021. Within the framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice. These are:

1. **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Children **develop and learn at different rates**. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and forming positive relationships. These are called the **Prime Areas**: Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social, and Emotional Development. A further four areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas. These are called the **Specific Areas**: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world and Expressive Arts and Design

The new EYFS framework provides us with a foundation from which to build a curriculum bespoke to Friarage School. We have created a set of curricular goals for both our Nursery and Reception children, designed to ensure that throughout their time in EYFS, children will learn from a broad and balanced curriculum, enriched by experiences to ensure progress towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

The role of adults

At Friarage we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas, and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

Practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences, which will support and challenge children to discover, explore and investigate in order to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts.

In both Nursery and Reception, the Class Teachers are assigned as the Key Person. They will support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

In Friarage EYFS adults support children's learning using a range of strategies:

The Facilitator

Adults enable play to happen. They are responsible for setting up a rich and stimulating learning environment that encourages independent play and investigation. Time needs to be given to allow children to explore the environment independently and learn at their own pace. Adults adapt the opportunities so that learning is accessible for all and are on hand to respond to the needs of the child. They become more or less involved in the play, as determined by the interactions with and reactions of the child.

The Scaffolder

Adults focus on supporting the development of emerging skills. Scaffolding supports a child in their acquisition of skills from not being able to complete a task, to completing it with help, to eventually completing it on their own. Adults use techniques such as offering help, modelling, and prompting.

Sustained shared thinking derives from scaffolding and the role of the adult here is to engage in the child's play and to work with the child to develop and extend their thinking and learning through problem solving, clarifying concepts, evaluating activities, and extending a narrative.

The Teacher

Adults teach children using different techniques. This includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating, and setting challenges.

Adult led activities will become more frequent across the EYFS as children progress with their learning.

- In the Nursery there will be timetabled group or whole class sessions such as singing or story sessions. Phonics skills are taught across the year, with the introduction of more formal phonics sessions in the Summer Term before starting school.
- In Reception there are timetabled sessions for PSHE, phonics, literacy, maths, and PE. Across the year, subject specific areas such as art, history, geography, science etc. will be timetabled. These will begin as short 20-minute sessions and will increase in length over the course of the year as is appropriate.

Planning

Our Curricular Goals set out what we want children at Friarage to achieve to help them to meet the Early Learning Goals of the EYFS and support future learning.

Our Long-term planning provides us with an overview of learning across the year and is a framework for our teaching and learning. It is designed to ensure a progressive learning path which develops breadth of experience and depth of understanding.

Our Medium-term planning sets out how the learning will be delivered across each half term. It is flexible, informed by assessment and generated in response to children's interests. It incorporates times that are special to our cohort and opportunities for new experiences.

Our Short-term planning organises how and when adult-initiated learning will be delivered across the week and how our Continuous Provision will support this. It considers the immediate needs of all children, their interests and their learning styles.

Assessment For Learning

Formative Assessment

At Friarage we believe on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice. All staff have high expectations, and the needs of learners will be fully understood by careful observation of their play, assessment during adult led tasks and through their own self-reflection.

Effective practice begins with observation, tuning into the child and then building a relationship. Most observations and assessment will take place in the moment to ensure learning is moved forward as quickly as possible. This means that some observations and assessments will be documented whilst some will be held in the mind of the practitioner. This year we are using Arc Pathway, Early Learning Software to help us collate, track, and monitor children's development and progress across all areas and share this information with parents.

Summative Assessment

Whilst we acknowledge that young children's development does not follow a predictable step-by-step sequence, and each child will have their own unique pathway, progression, and momentum, there are, however, some aspects of development that help us to describe the child's progress in terms of whether it is typical for their age.

As each child enters both Nursery and Reception, we will pull together insights from formative assessment and use our professional judgement to assess whether children are developing in line with ARE (Age Related Expectations) below ARE, or well below ARE. We call this our baseline judgement. This data is analysed and used to inform provision and planning for the cohort. At the end of each term, we will repeat this process. Regular monitoring and evaluation of children's progress enables us to continually adjust our provision in response to any areas of underachievement that may be identified.

Statutory Assessments

There are two statutory assessment points in EYFS:-

- All Reception Children will complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) from NFER within 6 weeks of their start date.
- At the end of a child's Reception year, we complete the EYFS Profile. This a statutory assessment of children's development at the end of the EYFS. Children are assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) stating whether they are EMERGING or EXPECTED. We will also measure and report on the progress each child has made from their Baseline Assessment to End of Year.

We are committed to making this process a positive experience for the child.

Parents as Partners

At Friarage County Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents and carers. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development.

Through our Parent App, emails and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual. This supports practitioners in establishing and responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through the School Parent App and Facebook Page. Parents are invited to attend drop-in sessions throughout the year at which we explain aspects of our curriculum and how they can support their child's learning. We also organise fun events for parents to attend with their children like stargazing, decorating our classroom at Christmas, Mother's Day afternoon tea, Father's Day breakfasts etc.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the academic year. The first of these takes place during the autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the school or nursery. Another parent's evening takes place during the spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress. The final parents evening takes place at the end of the year. It is an opportunity to discuss the child's achievements and their upcoming transition to Year One.

The school has a friendly and open-doors ethos, parents are always welcomed into school.

Admissions & Induction

Nursery

- Children are invited to apply for a place in our Nursery to start the term after they turn 3 years old.
- Prior to starting Nursery, we invite the children and parents to visit the school, meet the staff and see where they will be learning.
- Children with 15 hours funding can attend for 5 mornings or 5 afternoons or 2.5 days.
- Children eligible for 30 hours funding can attend 8:45am – 3:15pm.

Reception

- Friarage operates a single term admissions policy with all children starting in the autumn term.
- Parents are invited to an induction meeting in June.
- Children are given the opportunity to visit the school for “stay and play sessions” with their parents or Nursery Settings.
- Children start school in small groups and the routine of the school day is introduced gradually.

We offer a gradual, well supported start to school so children are introduced to the routines of the school at a pace that they are comfortable with. It also gives staff time to sufficiently support children into a new environment, with an understanding that some learners may require more comforting and socialising as they approach a more directed learning situation than they may have experienced before.

At the end of Reception there is extensive transitioning between those leaving the foundation stage as they move into KS1. The year 1 teacher spends time in the Reception classroom as well as the Reception children spending time in the Year 1 class.

Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at Friarage County Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within our EYFS. *See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.*

Special Educational Needs

Care is taken to assess the needs of each child from Nursery age onwards. We have links with various agencies and when necessary, their involvement may be required to support certain children. Parents/carers will always be informed if an outside agency is assisting us to support their child. *We have a full Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy available at the school.*

Photographs/Videos

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed and/or videoed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's individual learning journeys and on the school website.

Safeguarding

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. *The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school for parents/carers to read if they wish. The school also has an Intimate care policy available in school for parents/carers to read if they wish. Photograph/Video paragraph above is also relevant to this section.*

Health & Safety

We have a Health & Safety Policy which all staff and students are familiar with, and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. Foundation Stage staff have had Paediatric first aid training. We keep a note of any medical needs, allergies, children who need inhalers, antihistamines, epi-pens in all rooms so everyone is aware of the individual needs.

Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. *Both a full EYFS Risk Assessment and whole school Health & Safety Policy are available in school.*

Allergies

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. Official forms must be completed with supporting documentation from doctors where applicable. Meetings are then held with our School Catering Manager to create an individual plan for each child. We are a Nut Aware school.

Monitoring & Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system.

This policy will be reviewed annually at the start of the academic year and will evolve to incorporate the views of all staff concerned.