



# Milton on Stour Primary School: Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe children who are in our reception cohort.

This policy has been written taking into account our school's ethos, vision and values and is in line with the Single Equality policy.

## **Aims**

At Milton on Stour Primary we aim to provide the highest quality care and educational provision for all our EYFS children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent in their own learning. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and support every child in reaching their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

## **The EYFS Curriculum**

The four guiding principles from the statutory framework shape our provision and practice within the Early Years setting. These being:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs, with a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- 4) Children are learning and developing in different ways and at different rates.

Following these principles, the EYFS framework outlines seven areas of learning and development all of which are important and inter-connected. These seven areas are broken down into Prime and Specific areas of learning.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn, and to develop their ability to form relationships and thrive. These are called the Prime Areas and are built in to all areas of learning.

## **The three prime areas are:**

- Communication and Language (CL)

- Physical Development (PD)
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Children also receive targeted teaching through the four specific areas to enable them to learn skills and knowledge which are more specific to certain areas of learning and development. It is through these areas that the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four specific areas are:

- Literacy (L)
- Mathematics (M)
- Understanding the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

### **Principles into practice**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, across the 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning, using play and questioning as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, providing early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider school and church community.
- Plan exciting and challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child's achievements and interests, which are informed by ongoing observations and assessments to ensure provision is appropriate to each individual's stage of development.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

Through these principles into practice, our aim is to support every child in achieving their potential to work towards, achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

### **Planning**

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively, question and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS curriculum to structure learning outcomes. Each week or fortnight has a text focus which will offer experiences in all seven areas. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which takes account for flexibility when unplanned circumstances or children's responses further shape the learning process. These plans are reviewed by the SLT. Parent topic webs will be sent out each half term to inform them of the intended learning outcomes in different areas of learning for each half termly topic.

Children have whole group, small group and individual learning opportunities which offers them opportunities for independent learning through exploration with the balance of guided

learning opportunities alongside these. Guided learning will focus on supporting each child in their personal learning journey steps whilst also dedicating time for focused phonics sessions using our chosen scheme 'Song of Sounds' and teaching aspects of Mathematics and English, including shared reading and writing. This approach supports the EYFS curriculum focus of 'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

### **Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice staff observe and assess children's development and learning to inform future planning and to assess and record progress. We record our observations in a variety of ways using written, digital and pictorial recordings. Everyone is encouraged to contribute, parents being able to comment by sending things into school either with their child or to our dedicated Maize class email. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their individual Learning Journals. We also have a termly parent consultation opportunity and during open mornings we can discuss children's progress and parents can look at their child's work. We also operate an open door policy, where parents can share successes or concerns with their child's teacher at any point in the year. These ongoing observations are used to track individual progress against the 'Development Matters' (DM) bands.

The data gained from pre-school providers against the DM's help to form a picture of each child's strengths and gain a starting point for all children's learning. From September 2021 pupils are assessed using the new government EYFS baseline within the first six weeks of starting school. The children are then assessed and monitored termly as a continuation from this point and the DM statements will be used throughout the first year of school to record individuals attainment and to track individual progress.

The Government also believes that a good foundation in mathematics and literacy is crucial for later success, particularly in terms of children's readiness for school. We want to strengthen children's knowledge and understanding in these important areas. However, all areas of learning within the EYFS are important.

At the end of the school year a short report will be written about each child's achievements against key characteristics of learning; playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically. Assessment will be shared with parents and the Year 1 teacher. Please see our Assessment policy for the most recent assessment and tracking requirements from the government.

### **Safety**

Children's safety and welfare are paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and drink. We follow set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety and Child Protection.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at Milton on Stour Primary, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and sometimes exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate SEN and Equality policy for further information.

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider context**

Our church ethos is of paramount value to us at Milton on Stour Primary and as such parents and children are invited to participate in events organised in liaison with the church community, such as Milton On Stour After School In Church (MOSAIC). Children will be given frequent opportunities to explore the church and complete activities with visiting clergy.

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the local and global community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings/inviting members of the community into our setting. Our EYFS curriculum links with the golden threads of our school curriculum and there are termly planned trips, PSHE and diversity themes linked to our texts, and Character Skills to focus on each half term.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries, pre-schools and childminders. The school actively seeks information from pre-schools, including safeguarding information. Children attend introductory sessions to Milton on Stour Primary School to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

During the summer term, the child's class teacher and their Year 1 teacher will liaise to discuss the individual children, their needs and analyse the assessment data to inform a smooth transition into Year 1. The children will also have the opportunity to visit their new class and teacher prior to September.

**Policy Written: February 2019**

**Policy Reviewed: May 2021**

**Reviewed: November 2023**

**Next Review: November 2025**