



EYFS Policy 2023

At Watling Primary School, we want our children to embark on their school journey full of positive emotions, excitement and confidence so they settle quickly and are ready to start learning from day one.

With this in mind, we aim to:

- Make every child's first experience of school happy, safe and fun with the welfare of the child central to our provision of care, learning and play.
- Value the individuality of the children and ensure that regardless of their needs, all children can access opportunities to succeed and make good progress.
- Enhance the natural curiosity every child starts their school journey with by providing experiences based on active learning in a stimulating environment that develops interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Foster and nurture children's self-confidence so they are brave and recognise and fulfil their individual potential and special talents.
- Provide opportunities for children to take ownership of their learning and behaviour by making choices which will foster confident, independent and innovative learners and thinkers.
- Support children to develop care, respect and appreciation for the environment in which they live.
- Instil in our children a sense of respect for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own.
- Promote collaborative learning by encouraging children to develop positive relationships with their peers and other members of the school community.
- Ensure there is a smooth and effective transition between Reception and Year 1 so children are prepared emotionally and academically for Key Stage 1.

Parents as partners

We recognise and value the important role parents and carers play in the education of their children. Consequently, we encourage parents to engage in an active partnership with the school from the outset. This results in a positive impact on the child's development and forms the basis of a positive relationship where parents and carers can feel confident to share important information and to seek advice, help and support from the school should they need it. It creates a shared level of expectation, improves the child's outcomes and ensures every child has their individual needs met. The success of this strong partnership is based on a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

Before we officially welcome our children into Early Years Foundation Stage, we provide the following opportunities to facilitate a smooth transition:

- Prospective families are encouraged to visit the school before applying for a school place.
- Open communication is encouraged between school and parents or carers once school places have been confirmed.

- Home visits will be offered to all parents and carers. This gives our staff the opportunity to meet children in their own environment and learn more about them.
- Our staff will communicate with pre-school settings to gain further information about the previous experiences of our children. This may also involve our staff visiting children in their pre-school settings during the summer term to observe them in their familiar learning environment.
- Parents and carers of children with specific needs will have the opportunity to organise additional meetings with the Class Teacher and SENCo.
- Visits to school during the summer term prior to starting school will be arranged. The children will spend time in the indoor and outdoor areas whilst getting to know their peers and the staff. Parents and carers are welcome to stay for the duration of the visit to support the children to settle and to provide an opportunity to build relationships with the staff.
- A 'Welcome to Watling' meeting will be held for parents and carers. This is where important information and an overview of the curriculum will be shared to enable parents to understand the value of supporting their child's home learning.
- Families will receive an information booklet prior to their children starting.
- We will implement a staggered start to the Autumn term where children attend for a morning, a morning including lunch and then for the whole day.
- Our website contains important information for our parents and carers and will be updated regularly.

We follow the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage which sets out the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old.

The framework is based on four key principles:

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. Learning and development is important because children develop and learn at different rates.

Learning is presented in a variety of different ways in early years settings. There are some short teaching sessions the children must complete during the school day, such as phonics, English and Maths lessons.

At other times during the day, children are free to engage in our continuous provision, with opportunities for child-initiated learning both indoors and outdoors.

We embrace the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning, as outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Development Matters Document.

Playing and exploring (their engagement)

Children investigate, experience things and 'have a go' through a balance of adult led and child initiated planned, purposeful learning experiences.

Active learning (their motivation)

Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements. Opportunities are provided where the children have some independence and control over their learning and activities, making decisions and taking ownership.

Creating and thinking critically (their thinking)

Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Adults support this and offer encouragement through clarification and open-ended questions.

The learning environment is organised with a focus on supporting the children to develop these and other important learning characteristics to become confident communicators, active learners, problem solvers, team players, investigators and nurturers.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. For each area there are Early Learning Goals that describe the level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The seven components are grouped into prime and specific areas of development.

The 3 prime areas of development which build the foundations for children's success by igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, helping them to form positive relationships and thrive are:

Communication and Language (including Listening, Attention & Understanding and Speaking)

This area is valuable because spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development and children's early interactions form the foundations for language and cognitive development. All children are encouraged to interact with adults and their peers in a language-rich environment. Conversation, story-telling and role play enable children to use a developing range of vocabulary and rehearse language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (including Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships)

Children's development in this area is crucial so they can lead happy and healthy lives. At Watling Primary School, we focus on positive relationships between all members of our school community. We encourage children to develop respect for, and nurture, themselves and each other.

We support children to manage their emotions and resolve conflicts amicably, showing persistence and resilience when facing challenges, in addition to learning how to lead healthy lives and manage their personal needs independently.

Physical Development (including Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills)

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children develop the gross motor skills of core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility through games and activities both inside and outside. This is vital for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor skills are developed to enhance the progression of writing through tracing, colouring, painting, cutting, threading and many other aspects of manipulative play.

Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

The specific areas of development which provide the range of experiences and opportunities for children to strengthen and apply the prime areas are:

Literacy (including Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing)

With reading for pleasure a key indicator of children's future success, developing a life-long love of reading is crucial. Books and talking about books is prioritised and a daily feature of life in the early years environment with weekly learning always based on a story.

Through 'book talk', enjoying rhymes, poems and songs, the children develop language comprehension and listening skills that are important for reading and writing. As soon as they are ready, the children will begin learning the letter sounds and tricky words through our structured daily phonics programme called 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised'. Each week, the children have access to a phonics reading book that matches the sounds they know. They keep this book for a week and are encouraged to re-read it daily to develop word recognition, blending skills, fluency, expression and subsequently comprehension skills. They also bring home additional reading books that are at a more challenging level than the child can read independently. These books are to share as a family to develop a love of reading and books.

Regular trips to our amazing library are used as a further opportunity to enhance reading behaviours and skills and develop a love of reading.

Writing, in the form of mark-making, is encouraged from the time the children start at Watling Primary School as a way of expressing themselves and recording meaning.

The development of pre-writing skills and co-ordination are supported through fun, independent and regular adult led activities whilst children can practise their developing skills during meaningful play opportunities within in the learning environment. Children are taught how to form letters during phonics sessions as they learn the letter sounds.

Mathematics (including Number and Numerical Patterns)

The development of a strong foundation in number is crucial for children in order that they develop positive attitudes and become confident, resilient mathematicians as they grow and excel.

We provide children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers and calculating simple addition and subtraction problems.

They will learn through stories, songs, games and practical activities where they talk about maths, collaborate, explore and investigate number to look for patterns, connections and relationships. Children will develop their reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.

Understanding the World (including Past & Present, People, Culture & Communities and The Natural World)

This area includes History, Geography, Religious Education and Science with the aim of guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community.

Children will listen to a broad range of stories, non-fiction, poems and songs that will help to develop their understanding of our diverse world in addition to enriching and widening their growing vocabulary.

Enrichment opportunities are planned into our provision to further enhance the children's personal experiences to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design (including Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative & Expressive)

This area of learning focuses on developing children's imagination and creativity. The children engage in opportunities to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

They will also experience and use a range of media and materials to develop their expressive skills.

ASSESSMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

At Watling Primary School, we adhere to the principles of assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs.

All adults who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process, with great importance placed on parent voice.

Children are also encouraged to assess their own learning, primarily through discussion.

Statutory assessment

Within the first six weeks of a child starting in Reception, they undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a short and simple check of a child's early literacy, communication, language and maths skills. There is no pass mark or score and the assessment uses play-based activities so the children do not realise they are completing an assessment.

Ongoing formative assessment

This type of assessment informs our everyday planning and is based on continuous observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles.

Formative assessments may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, other specific assessments e.g. phonics and number, annotated examples of independent work, photographs, and information from parents.

We plan for observations when undertaking short term planning. Some of these observations and assessments are recorded using the online learning journey, Tapestry. Each child has a profile and the assessments are attached to that child's profile.

Summative assessment

The outcomes of baseline assessments are entered into our assessment tracking system and are complemented by ongoing teacher assessment. At regular points during the year, the tracking tool is used to summarise children's attainment and progress through the curriculum. This allows the school to see where the children are on their own developmental pathway and to track progress from their individual starting point.

At the end of the Reception year, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Its aim is to provide parents or carers and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities as well as their attainment against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1.

Each child's level of development is assessed as working towards or meeting the expected levels of development, against the early learning goals.

TRANSITION TO KEY STAGE 1

Transition between year groups is an important step for children and we acknowledge that the step from Reception to Year 1 is a significant one due to the expectations of moving from the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum to the National Curriculum.

There are many elements to ensuring our children experience a smooth and effective transition, some of which are listed below. We recognise that every child is unique, so the transition experience may need to be tailored to meet the individual needs of identified children.

- Reception children meet Year 1 staff at lunch time, during assemblies and through other whole school activities during their Reception year.

- Reception and Year 1 teachers work together throughout the year to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible for each cohort.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet during the summer term to discuss at length the individual needs of the children.
- EYFS Profiles and annual reports are passed on to the Year 1 teachers and discussed.
- SENCO, parents, Reception and Year 1 teachers meet during the summer term to discuss any additional needs and support.
- Reception children complete transition activities throughout the second part of the summer term which are documented for parents on Tapestry and in the newsletter.
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher in the summer term with additional visits arranged as necessary for children who require extra support with this transition.
- Year 1 maintains many similar routines to Reception and the classrooms include learning areas and resources that are recognisable too.

MONITORING IMPACT

Class teachers, alongside Senior Leaders and the SENCO meet termly to review the attainment and progress of children including key groups of children. These meetings also review the actions put in place to support children who are not working at expected levels of development or are not making expected progress through the curriculum.

Further termly analysis of the assessment data by the Senior Leadership team, enables us to reflect on the EYFS profile to ensure the curriculum offered is accessible for all and meets the needs of the children.

Teachers participate in regular in-school moderation and we actively seek out opportunities to externally validate our teacher assessments e.g. cross-school and local authority group moderation meetings.

At the end of the academic year, the EYFS Profile data is analysed by the Headteacher and the wider staff team. In this way, strengths and areas for development can be identified and actioned.