

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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1. Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Writtle Infant School, children join the Foundation Stage in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

We endeavour to ensure that children “learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2018)

The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

2. A 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. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning and that learning is fun!

3. Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at Writtle Infant School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and provision is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments/observations take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools SENCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school’s Inclusion policy for SEND and the school offer.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Allowing children to follow their own interests and ideas and giving them the time and space to do this. We support them by building upon and extending their knowledge, experiences and interests. This in turn develops their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and preferences;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe, supportive and enabling environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

4. Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Child Protection Policy)

"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 the EYFS 2017)

At Writtle Infant School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

5. Positive Relationships

At Writtle Infant School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

6. Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Meeting with parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during taster sessions.
- Supporting children through the transition from Pre-School/Nursery to Foundation Stage with the children attending part time during the first few weeks. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school. During the first half term we invite parents to a 'Picnic and Play' in order to detail how we aim to work with their child particularly in relation to reading and phonics. We have another 'Picnic and Play' during the summer term.
- We encourage parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. Parents can talk to us before and after school. We can also be contacted by email.
- There is a formal meeting for parents three times a year at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private. We provide parents with a written 'settling in report' and another report in the spring term.
- During the summer term we provide the parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgments with the teacher in preparation for Year 1.
- The children have 3 focus child weeks throughout the year, parents are invited in to celebrate their child's learning.
- We arrange a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: 'family learning time' sessions, school visits, Christmas concert and other curriculum mornings.
- We provide parents with an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "star" moments for our 'learning wall' which inform our provision.
- Parents are encouraged to contribute into their child's online learning journey through 'Tapestry'. Parent's observations, star moments, 'views from home' sheets and questionnaires are all used to provide a wider picture of the child.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and parents, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

7. Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and motivating 'workshop style' learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. Everything is available to them at all times so they can revisit and extend their play. We also aim for children to have ownership of their space and contribute to this. Our environment has a 'neutral pallet' to celebrate children's work. As a staff we recognise the importance of light, texture, softness and colour and the effect these things can have on a child. We acknowledge that our classrooms should have a strong sense of the children who occupy it. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with continuous provision and planned enhancements. The children can use both classrooms if they wish too. Both EYFS classrooms have access to an outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore and use their senses and be physically active. We also understand the importance of gross motor activities/skills and the effect these have on future learning. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests.

Please read our EYFS Rational which is attached. This explains how we value the importance of play and the individual child.

All staff meet weekly to discuss children's learning, experiences and interests and how to move the children forward.

8. Learning and Development

Teachers and teaching assistants provide the curriculum in classes of up to a class size of 30 children. There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

Through careful continuous assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed using 'Early Years Outcomes' and finally the ELGs. We also use our own tracking system to form our own baseline assessment and use the programme to track children's progress throughout the year. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with

the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the SENCO in order to access Special Educational Needs support. At Writtle Infant School we have pupil progress meetings and provide intervention groups according to the cohorts needs.

At Writtle Infant School:

“Each area of learning and development is implemented through purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.” (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017)

Planned and guided children's sessions such as phonics and maths will reflect on the way young children learn and we show this in our practice. At Writtle Infant School we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are;

- 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.

(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2017)

During the day children have a mix of whole group sessions and child-led time. These sessions increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. Religious Education is also taught in the Foundation Stage in accordance with Essex guidelines.

9. 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.

10. Health and Safety

At Writtle Infant 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, an annual risk assessment is conducted of the EYFS (see EYFS risk benefit assessment) and in the staff handbook, safeguarding and child protection policies, there is detailed information and procedures to ensure the

safety of the children. The EYFS risk benefit assessment must be read in conjunction with other relevant whole school policies (see EYFS risk assessment). Each week our environment is checked by members of staff and any problems reported.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2017, at Writtle Infant School we undertake;

- A whole school medication policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer." At Writtle Infant School a written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day." (Statutory framework for EYFS 2017)
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times. Milk is available for children.
- Children bring in a healthy fruit/vegetable snack each day and we provide a fruit/vegetable snack in the afternoon. We operate a 'rolling snack' system so children have the opportunity to develop their play without interruption.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept (see accident and injury policy). Both Teachers and one Teaching Assistant are paediatric first aid trained.
- The SENCO and the Headteacher are the named behaviour managers for the whole school. (Refer to Inclusions policy, behaviour policy, physical restraint policy)
- A health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- A safeguarding/Code of Conduct policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.
- Appropriate clothing, in particular in relation to the wearing of heels (stilettos or a heel that comes to a point). Staff are expected to wear clothing that supports them in getting to a child's level and playing and engaging with children at floor level. We encourage children to wear uniform that is practical and comfortable which enables them to access indoor and outdoor areas.

11. Transition

From Pre-school/Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Foundation Stage, 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 and allocation of classes and any concerns they may want to express.

- During the summer term parents are encouraged to complete an “all about me” booklet and make a ‘treasure box’. These are used during the autumn term to support transition and to inform assessments.
- Children are asked to bring in their pre-school/nursery ‘Learning Journeys’ to share with their class teacher. Staff also complete an ‘ALL About Me’ sheet.
- The children are invited to three separate visits to their class. One of these visits is without parents who are invited to an informal meeting with the PTA and a tasting by our catering company.
- Members of staff make visits to feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child’s needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child’s transition. We also offer home visits if parents feel it is needed.
- Children at Writtle Green Pre School and Ducklings Nursery (main feeder settings) will have visits with their key workers into school where they get an opportunity to engage with the current children.
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting. Often these children will have been identified as requiring additional support.
- Staff attend cluster group meetings with feeder settings to support the transition progress.

12. From Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Foundation Stage, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observations, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child’s level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Foundation Stage and Year 1 teachers about each child’s stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

To support transition to Year 1 children begin to have their lunch time break with the rest of the school when they are ready. The children also have the opportunity to go to the whole school Friday assembly when they are settled.

13. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS Leader (Rhian Fisk) will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

14. Equality statement

The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils regardless of gender, disability, and ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have access to the curriculum and the right to a learning environment which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.