



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Autumn 2023**

**Review: Autumn 2025**

### **Rationale**

This policy intends to:

- Make clear our vision for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Valley End Infant School.
- Provide clear guidelines for the implementation of the EYFS policy.
- Describe the procedures in place for monitoring in EYFS.
- Define clear responsibilities in relation to EYFS.

### **EYFS Vision:**

We play and learn at Valley End, from the day's start to the day's end.

We praise God and follow our golden rules.

Our learning adventures are inside and outside.

We enjoy challenges in our learning.

We celebrate our differences and know that we are all special.

We are all responsible for everyone's safety and happiness.

### **Principles of 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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives 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, GOV.uk 2023)

The EYFS is based upon the overarching principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments with teaching and support from adults
- The importance of Learning and Development.

## **A Unique Child**

At Valley End Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We follow our Golden Rules: We love and care and forgive each other. We always try hard to do our best. We are honest and always tell the truth. We respect property and God's creation. 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 recognition, encouragement and praise to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

## **Inclusion**

We are a caring Christian school but are inclusive of all communities and religions within our school community and celebrate our similarities and differences about what makes use all unique. We do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Valley End are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are high attainers, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- teaching through objective-led planning to ensure all children are engaged and reach their full potential through their interests;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and acting to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children about 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. We believe that 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 wellbeing of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Policy)

## **Welfare**

At Valley End we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare 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.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

The EYFS places clear duties on providers to keep children safe and promote their welfare. Providers must be alert to any issues of concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere. Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children. (Statutory Framework for EYFS, 2023)

### **Prevent**

At Valley End we have a focus on Personal, Social and Emotional Development that teaches children to learn 'right from wrong', mix and share with other children and value other's views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.' (Prevent Duty guidance in England and Wales, 2015)

### **Positive Relationships**

At Valley End we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent to form secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **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:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- meeting with parents prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school through transition visits;
- inviting all parents to a school readiness meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' via our online system Tapestry;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- parents contributing towards the 'Learning Journey' leaving comments relating to the children's achievements and adding home learning observations online.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teachers and Teaching Assistants act as 'Keyworkers' to all children in EYFS.

## **Enabling Environments with Teaching and Support from Adults**

At Valley End we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. We encourage children to take a lead in their learning and we plan towards their interests.

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

We plan using the Primary Knowledge Curriculum, this provides shared learning experiences on themes that captivate children's curiosity which ensures high levels of challenge and engagement. Alongside this we plan through child-led planning, where we identify individual targets and skills that need to be taught through play. We use Little Wandle to deliver our phonics provision and use the White Rose Maths alongside NCETM Mastering Number to deliver our maths curriculum.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual online 'Learning Journeys'. They also contain information provided by parents. At Valley End, we use the Tapestry to observe and assess children. At the end of Reception, we report to Surrey and parents whether their child has made a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) against the specific and prime areas of learning.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). We give an opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher during a meeting.

## **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up so that children are able to find equipment and resources independently for their open-ended play. We have an engaging and purposeful outdoor environment that has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

The outdoor environment has been tailored to provide a range of opportunities for the children to develop their skills in. The various zones allow exploration of different areas of learning from physical development to communication and language. Being outdoors is key for the children's mental health and wellbeing by engaging in activities that cannot be achieved to the same level in the classroom. The children can access learning indoors and outdoors all day, any weather.

## **The Importance of Learning and Development**

At Valley End we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- the seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes (described below)
- the early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the reception year
- the assessment requirements (when and how practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents)

Development Matters, non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS, is available to support providers in their delivery of the EYFS learning and development requirements.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are the prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

(Statutory Framework for EYFS, 2023)

## **Play**

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning. As children grow older and move into the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1." (Statutory Framework for EYFS, 2023)

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

The importance of play feeds into necessity of the outdoor area that we provide to allow children to develop their skills with confidence and in ways they may not indoors. The staff are trained to enhance their learning experiences through interacting in their play and developing their ideas and skills further.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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.

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2023)

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

- The EYFS Team work collaboratively with the EYFS Lead to ensure that they meet every child's unique needs, provide enabling environments, build positive relationships and ensure learning and development standards are in line with the Valley End Standards.

- The EYFS Team work in collaboration with the Special Education Needs and disabilities co-ordinator (SENDco) and outside agencies to ensure the highest standards of provision for our children with additional needs.
- The EYFS class teachers are responsible for planning a well-structured transition procedure that ensures children are safe and happy as they start school; planning to meet needs of each individual child and provide opportunities both inside and outside to ensure development in the prime and specific areas; responding to child initiated play; assessing children's stage of development and planning their next steps and recording on Tapestry; identifying any gaps in children's learning and who are not on track for reaching GLD by the Summer Term and putting in place interventions that will support their progress; liaising closely with parents to share successes and plan next steps.
- The EYFS class teachers will work with subject leaders to identify and monitor how their curriculum area lends itself to the EYFS curriculum.
- The EYFS Lead reports to the Headteacher and the EYFS Governor.

**The Headteacher and EYFS Lead are responsible for ensuring that:**

- Monitoring standards in the EYFS by observing teachers and teaching assistants and conducting learning walks to monitor the indoor and outdoor provision.
- Analysing pupil progress and attainment, including individual pupils and specific pupil groups using data from Tapestry, Arbor and Little Wandle.
- Holding teachers to account for the progress individual pupils make towards their end-of-year targets.
- Ensuring the Statutory Baseline Assessment is completed in the first 6 weeks of term (or within six weeks of the child starting at Valley End).
- Ensuring that data is collected and submitted to Surrey as to whether each child has reached the ELG in all areas to achieve GLD.
- Ensuring that all EYFS team members are familiar with the current EYFS Policy and practice.

Please refer to the following supporting policies:

Safeguarding  
 Special Educational Needs and disabilities  
 Intimate Care  
 Assessment Policy  
 Teaching and Learning

Note: In this policy the term 'parents' refers to 'parents or carers'