Be the best you can

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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Policy Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a secure foundation for learning, development and good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Introduction

This policy is based on the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS), published by the Department for Education in September 2021. We meet all statutory requirements set out in this framework for children from birth to the end of the reception year.

Watling View School follows the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for all pupils in nursery and reception. Due to the complex needs of our pupils, many of whom are working at very early developmental stages, we also use an EYFS approach to teaching and learning for pupils in Key Stage 1 and, where appropriate, at the start of Key Stage 2. This means these older pupils benefit from a play-based, child-centred curriculum that supports their early development, even though they are not formally within the EYFS age range. This is provided through an environment and curriculum which allows the child to learn and develop to their maximum potential by creating awe and wonder throughout all environments and ensuring that early communication is at the core of all play / learning based activities. In achieving this we

know that we are providing the best start to an individual's education and preparing them for a successful school life.

Aims

The aims of the EYFS curriculum are as follows

- Recognise all children are individuals.
- Provide free-flow learning environments that inspire awe and wonder and provide high-quality learning experiences
- To have a child focused curriculum where we can take their interests and respond to their developmental needs in order to enable each individual to make progress and be deeply engaged in their learning.
- To provide a variety of meaningful learning opportunities throughout the curriculum where pupils can demonstrate their ability to learn key concepts.
- Clearly identify the starting point for the individual and provide experiences where young people achieve success and create that love of learning from the earliest age.
- Develop an environment that has early communication at the heart of everything.
- To work in partnership with professionals and parents to ensure a holistic approach to pupil development.
- To provide the foundations of learning that an individual will need for their next stage of learning and beyond.

The curriculum

At Watling View School, we are guided by the four principles in the EYFS:

- Every child is unique
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

In EYFS classes at Watling View we aim to provide a curriculum that has a breadth and depth to it and allows for young people to develop social, life, independence, communication and key skills from the start of their education whilst upholding the core principles of a play-based curriculum. We believe that Preparation for Adulthood begins as soon as a pupil joins Watling View. The EYFS department operates on a thematic approach to teaching and learning with a 3-year rolling programme and each theme lasting for half a term. Different environments are used to support the curriculum, these include the Classroom, Outdoor Playgrounds, Swimming Pool / Hydrotherapy, Horticulture, Forest School, PE and regular Community Visits. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities to take part in Theme Days alongside Winter and Summer Sports Days.

The Prime areas of learning are

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Emotional and Social Development
- Physical Development

The Specific areas are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Art and Design

Play based approach to learning

The curriculum is delivered through play, play is essential for children's development, building confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others and solve problems. Careful consideration is given to the environment within EYFS, both inside and outside of the classroom to ensure all pupils can access and succeed in their environment. Play is a fundamental way in which young children learn and is used to promote and develop key skills including Communication, Independence, Life and Social Skills. Alongside the play-based approach to learning are a variety of sessions where pupils come together to learn key skills and knowledge, this includes phonics, communication and maths skills.

Activities will include a mix of

- Child initiated activities – children make choices from within the learning environment to meet their outcome for learning.
- Adult initiated activities – practitioners provide the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning.
- Adult directed activities – Children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes.

Planning, recording and assessment

Themes are planned on a three-year cycle and run for half a term at a time. This means that children will experience each theme as they progress through the EYFS department.
Planning takes into account individual needs and EHCP Outcomes (Journey Targets) and are provided opportunities to develop early communication throughout all curriculum areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and development of each child in their care, and consider whether the child needs any additional support. They use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

In planning and guiding the children's activities, staff reflect on the different rates at which children are developing, and take these into account

Pupils are assessed using a variety of different assessment models. A primary method of assessing pupil progress is through Personalised Learning Goals. All pupils have 10 termly PLGs
5 Journey Targets – directly linked to the long-term targets set out in their EHCP documents.
5 Satellite Targets – attainment descriptors drawn from the core subjects of school curriculum frameworks.

At Watling View School ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their progress, development and interests. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers and keep them up to date with the child's progress and development. Staff will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

Pupils are baselined 6 weeks after a pupil enters the setting, this baseline is through Watling View's assessment system as well as the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Alongside this baselining process, pupils are baselined on our internal assessment system using either I Can statements or where a pupil has Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties using the ImPACTS assessment system.

Children are assessed on a continual basis with members of staff conducting ongoing observations and adapting the environment based on their observations. In addition, all pupils have Learning Journals (using Evidence for Learning) which document their achievements and learning throughout the year.

As pupils develop through the EYFS it is expected that children will work for longer periods on more adult led activities and in a more formal setting with reducing adult support.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We establish strong partnerships with families from the moment a child joins our EYFS department:

- The class teacher or head of department and Family Liaison Advisor conduct a home visit before the child starts, to gain an understanding of the child's individual needs and to help families understand what to expect at Watling View
- The class teacher visits the child's previous educational setting to learn about strategies that work well for the child

We keep parents and carers informed about their child's progress and development through:

Ongoing communication:

- Daily informal conversations at drop-off and pick-up times
- Phone calls or messages to share significant achievements or concerns
- Access to their child's learning through Evidence for Learning, where parents can view photos, videos and observations of their child's learning and add their own contributions

Formal progress reviews:

- **Termly PLG reviews** – At the end of each term, we provide a formal written review of progress against your child's 10 Personalised Learning Goals (5 Journey Targets linked to EHCP outcomes and 5 Satellite Targets from curriculum frameworks). These reviews clearly show what your child has achieved and the next steps in their learning.
- **Parents' evenings** – We hold parents' evenings twice a year (autumn and spring terms) where you can meet with your child's teacher and key person to discuss progress in detail, look at work samples, and share observations from home.

- **Annual review meetings** – As all our pupils have Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), we hold an annual review meeting to evaluate progress towards EHCP outcomes, review provision, and plan for the year ahead. Parents are central to this process and their views are actively sought.
- **EYFS Profile report** – For children in their reception year, we inform the LA if individuals are meeting the level of development expected at the end of EYFS (expected) or if they are not yet reaching this level (emerging). Families are provided an end of year report which provides a summary about the progress their child has made.

Transition

On entry to the EYFS the Class Teacher or head of department and Family Liaison Advisor conduct a home visit to gain an understanding of the needs of the individual as well as providing parents and families with an understanding about Watling View. The class teacher will also conduct a visit to the education establishment that the young person is in to gain an of the strategies that are used within the educational setting.

When transitioning out of the department there is a carefully transition process to support pupils this includes meetings among staff teams, key pupil documents being shared, transition days and transition visits.

Staff training

We will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding procedures in line with Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance
- Support all staff to feel supported and confident in implementing our safeguarding policy and procedures
- Renew training every 2 years, or more often when it's needed to help maintain skills; keep up to date with any changes to our safeguarding procedures; or because of any safeguarding concerns

Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will:

- Provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to all staff
- Attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework
- Liaise as needed with local statutory children's services agencies and our local safeguarding partners

Safer recruitment & Safeguarding

When recruiting staff, we will follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework guidance on checking the suitability of new recruits, including:

- Obtaining a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited
- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references

See our safeguarding policy for details of our safer recruitment procedures.

If an allegation is made against a member of staff, we will follow the procedures set out in Part 4 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and our safeguarding policy. We will report allegations to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) within one working day

The EYFS department follows the school safeguarding policies and procedures, therefore the child protection policy should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Whistleblowing

We make sure that all staff are aware of our whistleblowing procedures; feel able to raise concerns about any poor or unsafe practice; and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

In the event that a member of staff feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to the headteacher. If the concern is about the headteacher, or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the chair of governors.

Malicious or vexatious allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, we will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere.

See our child protection policy for more information.

Health and Safety

Risk assessment We carry out risk assessments for all areas of the EYFS environment, including outdoor spaces, and for all outings and visits. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and updated when necessary. Staff are trained to identify and manage risks appropriately.

Administering medicines, we follow our school's medicines policy when administering medicines to children in the EYFS. Parents must complete a consent form before we can administer any medicine. Only prescribed medicines will be administered, and a record is kept of all medicines given. See our medicines policy for full details.

Food and drink We promote healthy eating and provide nutritious snacks and meals. We take account of children's dietary needs and preferences, including any allergies or cultural requirements. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

Intimate care A number of children in our EYFS may require intimate care such as support with toileting or changing. We follow our intimate care policy to ensure children's dignity is maintained and they are kept safe.

Outdoor learning Children have access to outdoor learning every day (weather permitting). Our outdoor areas are safe, secure and provide opportunities for physical activity, exploration and learning across all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Paediatric first aid (PFA)

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

Nursery Aged Pupils

Whilst we currently have no nursery aged pupils on roll, this process is used to support the school should we have nursery aged pupils in future years.

Recruitment Process

· During onboard ask for Level 3,4,5 qualification certificates, as we would with teacher qualifications, to evidence

· Request written confirmation of modules covered

· Check the qualification on the DFE site to check the qualification is an approved qualification for EY staffing

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-an-early-years-qualification

and

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualifications-achieved-in-england

· Log the qualification on the SCR, in the same way we do with teacher qualifications

· Keep a copy of the certificate on the personnel file, with the course modules

· Keep a list of all Level 3 qualified staff for consideration in staffing ratios for if/when we have nursery aged pupils on roll

Staffing Ratios for Nursery Classes in Maintained Schools:

For children aged 2:

· One member of staff for every five children at minimum.

· One member of staff must have a level 3 qualification.

· Half of all staff must have a level 2 qualification

For children aged 3 – 4:

· One member of staff for 13 children.

· One member of staff must be a school teacher as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002.

· One other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification.

Other Guidance

Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size legislation, which is limited to 30 pupils per school teacher (subject to permitted exceptions) while an ordinary teaching session is conducted. 'School teachers' do not include teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants, or other support staff. Consequently, in an ordinary teaching session, a school must employ sufficient school teachers to enable it to teach its infant classes in groups of no more than 30 per school teacher

Some schools may choose to mix their reception classes with groups of younger children (for example, nursery pupils, non-pupils, or younger children from a registered provider). In such cases they must determine ratios within mixed groups, guided by all relevant ratio requirements and by the needs of individual children within the group. In exercising this discretion, the school must comply with the statutory requirements relating to the education of children of compulsory school age and infant class sizes. Schools' partner providers must meet the relevant ratio requirements for their provision.