



Pitmaston Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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. Teaching and Learning with in the school environment, ensures the children's 'school readiness', and provides the strong foundation for a good future through school and life.' ('The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE October 2024).

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- To provide quality and consistency in all Early Years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- To provide a secure foundation of opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed regularly and reviewed
- To build a partnership working between practitioners and with parents/carers
- To ensure equality of opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported
- To ensure all learning and development requirements covering the areas of learning, the early learning goals and the assessment arrangements at the end of reception year in school
- To implement all safeguarding and welfare requirements that cover the steps providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. In our school there is a Pre-school Nursery for three year olds and three Reception classes where children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five years old.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available from the school office or to download at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa42a30536cb92748328f/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_-_based_providers.pdf

The Reception curriculum map can be viewed on the school website within 'Curriculum'.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which teaching and supporting adults respond to their individual needs. Children benefit from strong partnerships between practitioners and parents and/or carers;

- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. (DfE 2024: 1.4).

The prime areas are:

Communication and Language – Listening, Attention and Understanding and Speaking

Physical Development – Fine Motor Skills and Gross Motor Skills

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

Literacy – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing

Mathematics – Numbers and Numerical Patterns

Understanding the World – Past and Present, People, Cultures and Communities

Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS no longer includes the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are not statutory to be used in Early Years settings but at Pitmaston we continue to appreciate their importance. These can be found in Development Matters 2020. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. Observations are completed for children and shared with parents on Tapestry with parents as part of their learning journeys. The three characteristics are:

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and explore things through experiences, and are willing to '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.

The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities throughout the setting with this in mind. Teachers support the children's understanding of these characteristics through discussion of eleven characters, which each display a particular characteristic. E.g. 'Concentrating Crocodile' concentrated on their learning. Stickers are awarded to children displaying a particular characteristic to celebrate and support the children in sharing their learning experiences with their families. The characters for the Characteristics of Effective Learning can be found on the school website within Curriculum/ Early Years.

British Values

At Pitmaston Primary School and Pre-School Nursery we actively promote British Values meaning that we challenge opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British Values. We bring British Values to life through theme days, visitors and educational trips focusing in the Early Years on right or wrong, similarities and differences, pupils keeping themselves safe, choices, jobs and responsibilities.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. By the Summer Term in

Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children and these are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge that the children then practise and embed through their play. Each day, we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on maths, literacy (including phonics and stories) and theme work. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to each other whilst sitting still, discussing ideas with a partner, taking turns to answer, becoming a confident and clear speaker.

Reading and stories play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. Every child has their own book bag, in which they take a home a Home Reading diary to record the books that they share with an adult. Each child has the opportunity to choose a book to take home each day. At first, these are books to be read by and shared with an adult but once the child has sufficient phonic knowledge to read we encourage them to read to their adult.

The Reception classes use 'Talk for Writing' to support the children to learn different story types that can be retold, acted out, and changed to make new stories. Throughout the Early Years we share a variety of books and stories daily. Our Reception classes make a weekly visit to our on-site Forest School. There, they take part in outdoor and adventurous activities planned by our trained Forest School leaders as well as child led learning and exploration. The children go out in all weathers, wearing protective salopettes when particularly wet, muddy or cold.

Planning

Our themes are led by the children's interests, giving them an opportunity to ensure their voice is heard. We include school themes and local or national events e.g. World Book Day. Every half term, staff outline the next theme, using our school's Creative Curriculum. Each theme has a Launch and Celebrate element and teachers plan activities, visits or visitors that will enhance the learning. This is mapped against a half-termly gap and strength analysis to ensure all children's next steps are planned for across the curriculum. The Early Years team share a weekly PPA session so that sharing of ideas, progression of skills taught, direction of the learning journey, good practise and moderation can take place.

Visits and visitors

The part that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Pitmaston Primary is given great emphasis, even in the Early Years. We aim to have one visit or visitor a term; these can range from a visit to the local library on foot to travelling by coach to the nearest relevant attraction. We actively seek parental support on trips.

Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' coming in to talk to the children, a doctor for example. We often ask parents if they are able to share knowledge or a skill, be it cooking, how to bath a baby, painting mehndi patterns on hands or playing guitar.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. All classrooms have practical writing and maths resources, a book corner, a carpeted teaching area with access to an interactive whiteboard and direct access to our outdoor classroom area. A shared internal space (The Pod) provides a construction area, creative arts area, malleable area, small world area as well as writing and maths resources. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session/day is. The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with daily opportunities to choose learning experiences outside. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction. In Nursery, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key. Both Nursery and Reception use the Key Stage 1 hall for Physical Education/Games lessons. Each child has their own labelled peg in the cloakroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely.

Assessment, Observations and Learning Journeys

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual Learning Journey books and Tapestry accounts. We are very proud of their learning journeys: these are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child.

IPad's are used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey through the use of Tapestry and our WOW moments, where significant events that happen at home can be recorded. They are available in each classroom and can be taken home to complete or can be completed with the support of a member of staff. The Learning Journey Books are given to parents during Year 1 or if they leave our setting.

On entry to Nursery and Reception we carry out Statutory and internal baseline assessments for each child. It is a statutory requirement for all children in Reception to complete the national Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which must be completed within 6 weeks of starting school. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher submits termly assessment data showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception, the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging' or 'expected'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed with your child's class teacher by appointment. At the end of the year, every school reports the percentage of pupils who achieve a 'Good Level of Development'.

Role of staff and key worker

Each child has a named key worker in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive, respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of

healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore, we work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as the Nursery and Reception visit days we offer a 'Meet the Teacher' session at the beginning of the school year and offer parenting workshops and 'Share a sessions' for parents each term, including our successful maths and phonics sessions!

Transition into Pre-school Nursery and Reception

When a child gains a place at Pitmaston Pre-school Nursery or in Reception we ask the parents to attend an Information Evening at the school where they will get the chance to meet the Early Years Team and see the environments in which their child will be learning. In Pre-school Nursery each child is given the opportunity to attend a settle session with a parent(s) to become more familiar and comfortable in the setting. In Reception each child has the opportunity to attend a settle session; known as a 'Stay and Play' session with other new Reception intake.

Each Reception child is offered a Home Visit to enable the child and their parents to meet their child's teacher and teaching assistant and discuss their child's interests and needs.

Reception Parents are invited to attend a Parents' Evening twice a year and receive a school report at the end of the year.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Transition

At Pitmaston Primary School we are proud to have our 'Centre of Excellence' award through the Inclusion Quality Mark Criteria for our exemplary inclusive practice. We ensure that we meet the individual, learning needs of all our pupils through our excellent teaching and learning, providing differentiated work and a personalised approach. We have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, ensuring the best possible progress for our pupils through an exciting curriculum.

For those pupils with additional needs individual transition plans will be arranged involving external agencies where necessary in liaison with parents, taking place over a longer period of time with increased shorter, settle sessions. Transition booklets are created for pupils including photographs of the setting, key areas and practitioners. Visual timetables are used in the Early Years and throughout school to support all pupils. Please see the school's SEND and Inclusion Policy.

In September all Reception children start full time and in Pre-School Nursery children attend their chosen/allocated hours.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

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 the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2024) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/670fa42a30536cb92748328f/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_-_based_providers.pdf

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the EYs classrooms or provision and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Pitmaston Primary School Safeguarding Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Mobile Phones and Cameras Policy. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's portfolios, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website and Tapestry observation through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit from a Government scheme. Free milk is available until your child is five. Children staying over the lunchtime session in Pre-School bring a packed lunch. All Reception pupils are entitled to a hot school lunch (free to all pupils through the Universal Free School Meals scheme), although parents can provide a packed lunch if they wish. It is encouraged for the children to begin the school year trying the school lunches as the children are more adventurous with new foods among their peers.

We take all accidents seriously and always log and advise parents if a child bumps their head. We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will assist with this where needed. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves!) and have some spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. Where accidents are common, it is asked that a change of clothing is provided to make it changes a smooth transition. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets with the support of two adults.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment. We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see the Safeguarding Policy) and all concerns are reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We have separate policies for First Aid/medicine in school and off-site visits.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Pitmaston Primary School policies including:

Safeguarding Policy

SEND and Inclusion Policies

First Aid & Administration of Medicines Policies

Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies

Care and Control Policy

Pre-School Admissions Policy & Pre-School Handbook

Policy approved at the Governing Body meeting on 19th June 2025

Policy to be reviewed – June 2028