



GOMERSAL
PRIMARY SCHOOL



**Gomersal Primary
School
Foundation Stage
Policy
(March 2017)**

**“Play is the highest form of research”
Albert Einstein**

Purpose

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Gomersal Primary School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception Year. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in Foundation Stage to take on the task of building upon their prior learning and experiences. The Foundation Stage team work effectively together, to support children's learning and development.

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage (Year R) at Gomersal Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early Years Foundation Stage

“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.” (DFE, 2012)

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- The Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

The Unique Child

At Gomersal Primary School 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, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At Gomersal Primary School we recognise that children learn to be independent confident learners from secure relationships with their peers and adults. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

Additionally we believe that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observation we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

We also plan and consider the Learning Environment. The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The Unit is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Learning and Development

The Early Learning Goals are set out in the “Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage” document (DFE, 2012).

The seven areas of learning and development are:

Prime:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)

Specific:

- Mathematics (M)
- Literacy (L)
- Understanding of the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

All the above areas are important to ensure the development of the ‘whole child’. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All practitioners who work in the Foundation Stage at Gomersal Primary School are involved in making observations of the children’s new learning. The planning within the EYFS is based around the interests of children and their development needs. This knowledge is used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning; however they may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. 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 recorded observations (written or photographed) as well as teacher’s professional judgements.

These observations are used to inform progress and next steps of learning, linked to Development Matters, Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning (DfE, 2014). Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary report to parents, highlighting their child’s attainment and how they demonstrate the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The parents are given the opportunity to meet the Foundation Stage team at various points throughout the year for shared learning events. There are also three opportunities for parents to meet their child’s keyworker on more formal occasions.

Safety

Children’s safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks.

We risk assess and have procedures in place to ensure children’s safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. There is always a paediatric first aider in the school.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Gomersal, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that we expect most of our children to achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Staffing and Organisation

At Gomersal Primary School, we have a 60 place Foundation Unit based in two rooms, allowing free flow throughout the whole Unit, so that the children can access the curriculum at an appropriate level to match their ability. There are also doors leading to our outdoor provision. Children have access to outdoors throughout the whole day, during child initiated time.

Learning through play

“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.” (“Early Years Foundation Stage”, DFE, 2012)

At Gomersal Primary School we support children’s learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

Induction to Reception

During the summer term, nursery children who will be starting school in September make more formal visits to the Foundation Unit, as part of the induction process. They are encouraged to come to “Stay and Play” sessions. Parents/carers have the opportunity to meet the practitioners and come to an information meeting and visit the Foundation Unit. Parents/carers are given a pack which outlines the Reception curriculum and school routines, along with other necessary documentation.

Transfer records from pre-school settings inform practitioners about the new intake. Where possible, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further. During the induction period in September, children are split into two groups. They begin part-time sessions, and then progress onto half days plus lunch, before starting fulltime.

The aims of this transition are to

- allow the children to adjust and feel secure in their new environment
- allow the practitioners to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships
- allow the practitioners to carry out initial assessment

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Gomersal Primary School:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the Reception year.
- Reception practitioners plan longer more structured activities to be undertaken during the

summer term; encouraging less dependence on adult support.

- Reception children meet Year 1 teachers during assemblies and other whole school activities during the Reception year.
- End of Year assessments against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of effective learning are shared and discussed.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a morning in July, as well as the Year 1 teachers visiting the Reception classrooms.
- Year 1 classrooms include learning areas similar to the Reception classrooms: e.g. role play, sand water etc.

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Out-lining the school's expectations to parents/carers during the new parents' meeting in June.
- Holding further curriculum workshops to guide parents in supporting their child's learning at home.
- Holding parent/carer "Open Days" per term.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- Discussing children's individual targets with parents/carers at parents' evenings.

“There is little that gives children greater pleasure than when a grown-up lets himself down to their level, renounces his oppressive superiority and plays with them as an equal”

Sigmund Freud

This policy was approved by the Governing Body of Gomersal Primary School at their meeting on.....

Signed..... Chair of Governors

It will be reviewed in _____