



## **St Merryn Primary School Early Years Foundation (EYFS) Stage Policy**

### **The Foundation Stage**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) begins from birth and continues until the end of the reception year. We recognise it as a crucial stage in a child's education, both in preparing them for education in Key Stage 1 and in instilling a lifelong passion for learning whereby they are excited and motivated to learn. We firmly believe that all children should be given the best possible start, and therefore place great value on the quality of our provision in the Foundation Stage.

### **Aims:**

The school aims to:

- Foster positive attitudes to learning, developing confidence, curiosity, responsibility and independence.
- Promote an inclusive ethos and approach to learning for all of our children to ensure that none are excluded or disadvantaged. For further details, please refer to our school Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Provide children with a well balanced, varied curriculum which fosters enthusiasm for learning and is both challenging and progressive within a stimulating environment.
- Develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in all areas of development through first hand experiences.
- Provide opportunities for children to make choices and become independent in their learning in a variety of safe environments both indoors and outdoors.
- Establish and maintain a close partnership with parents/carers, families, child minders and nursery/pre-school providers in our community.
- Use a variety of formal and informal assessment procedures to monitor progress, inform future planning and build on children's prior learning and interests.

### **Admission**

Our school follows the Cornwall Primary School Admission Arrangements as set out in the annual admission information given to the parents of prospective pupils in the autumn term. All children begin full time school in September, although there is an opportunity for children under 5 to attend mornings only (by arrangement with the Head teacher). Parents have the right to defer admission of their child

until the child is of compulsory school age (ie. until the beginning of the term after their fifth birthday). We have a pupil admission number of 15 in the Foundation Year.

### **Starting School**

During the summer term, the children who have been offered a place at our school attend transition sessions to support their entry into the reception class. The large majority of our children come from our nursery. Where they don't the reception class teachers contact the parents/carers with details of the transition programme which gives plenty of opportunity for parents/carers and children to familiarise themselves with the school. The reception class team visits the children within their pre school settings and also provides a number of transition mornings in their new school setting. Parents are also given an invitation to an informal meeting which includes information regarding school routines, an overview of the Foundation curriculum and the procedures used to assess the children. An individual meeting between parents/carers, the child and the Reception class teachers is also timetabled. Where children have come from our nursery transition happens throughout the year as the reception staff familiarize themselves with the children during their PPA time and during breaks. Towards the end of the year when the children are familiar the nursery teacher accompanies children to the reception environment for informal sessions such as a story time. There is also the opportunity for parents to come in and work alongside the children and for families to have a family event, normally at our local beach.

### **Curriculum**

Our core reference document is the revised framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage supported by the non-statutory guidance material 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage'. This includes the principles for good practice which underpin our school provision.

There are 3 **Characteristics of Effective Learning** which underpin all areas of learning and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner, these are:

- **playing and exploring**
- **active learning,**
- **creating and thinking critically**

The Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning and development;

3 **Prime** areas are fundamental, work together, and move through to support development in all other areas:

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

4 **Specific** areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:

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

Within these seven areas of learning and development, the early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some children in our school will exceed these goals and others will still be working towards them as they enter Year 1.

Although the seven areas of learning and development form the framework for our planning and teaching, we are aware that children's learning is not divided into distinct areas. Often, one experience helps a child to develop a range of new skills and concepts across several areas of learning and our planning reflects this as a cross curricular, child-centered approach is adopted.

Religious Education conforms to the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus.

### **Teaching and learning**

We believe that our children learn best when they are happy, enthused and stimulated. As such our Foundation Stage environment allows children to be actively involved in their learning as they select resources and activities that suit their needs and interests. Through these we encourage our children to explore, experiment, question, investigate, discover, create and extend and consolidate their developing understanding, knowledge and skills. The changeable nature of the Foundation Stage curriculum means that planning is carried out on a short term basis, often daily, altering to suit the children.

We believe that well-planned play is key to children's learning and development during the Foundation Stage, and therefore ensure that our children have plenty of opportunities to play in a secure environment with effective support from caring adults. We utilise the classroom and outdoor areas to enable children to access both planned, structured play activities and self-initiated, spontaneous play activities.

### **Assessment, recording and reporting**

Our assessment of pupil progress throughout the Foundation Stage is based primarily on observation of daily activities and events. We look for consistent and independent examples to show embedded learning. Our judgments are informed by a range of contexts and perspectives, we consider vital to use the knowledge of parents/carers in our assessment. Evidence draws heavily on child initiated activity. All assessments inform future planning to ensure activities are suitably challenging, and build on what the children have already learnt.

Pupil progress at the end of the Reception year is recorded using the Foundation Stage Profile. On entry to school we make initial assessments of individual children against the Foundation Stage regarding what children already know, understand and can do. Pupil achievements throughout the Foundation Stage are collated in an individual Learning Journey. This takes the form of an online learning journey where evidence towards the Profile scale points is recorded and annotated. We believe it is important to include children and families in the compilation of this record. Progress is monitored at regular intervals throughout their time in EYFS.

During the school year we hold Parental Review Meetings to discuss each child's progress and development, and consider future targets and learning needs. There are also opportunities for informal daily discussion between parents and staff at any point during the year, as achievements outside of school also feed directly into our assessments. At the end of the school year in the summer term, parents are given a written report which shares information about their child's progress in the seven areas of learning and development and also comments on their 'Characteristics of Effective Learning.' Our report format invites comments and provides an opportunity for discussion.

During the summer term each child's achievements within the Foundation Stage Profile are summarised and data is submitted to the LA as part of statutory assessment.

### **Partnership with Parents/ carers**

We believe that parents are children's most enduring educators and strive to promote a successful partnership between home and school with a two-way flow of knowledge, information and expertise. We encourage parents/ carers to become actively involved in their child's learning by sharing curriculum information with them and providing plenty of opportunities for them to share experience, information and thoughts with us. We offer an informal workshop on Read Write Inc for new parents in the Autumn term. Parents/ carers are welcomed into the classroom on a daily basis to share in their child's learning environment and are invited on school excursions as voluntary support. We use parents' skills and areas of interest wherever possible to enrich our curriculum. Recent examples include visiting our local farm shop to make sausages, visiting a farm at lambing time and involving parents in rock pooling workshops on our family beach day. Weekly homework tasks in the reception year are primarily creative, family based activities which promote communication and language development.

### **Inclusion**

At our school we provide a safe and supportive learning environment where the contribution of **all** children is valued. We employ a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's experiences, interest, skills and learning needs. In particular we plan carefully to meet the needs of;

- Boys and girls
- Children with special educational needs
- Children with different abilities
- Children with disabilities
- Children from all social, cultural and religious backgrounds
- Children of different ethnic groups including Travelers and refugees
- Children from diverse linguistic backgrounds

### **The Learning Environment**

We review our accommodation annually to ensure that it meets statutory requirements.

Wagtails and Wrens are housed in separate Elliot buildings with clean, child-friendly toilets and a cloakroom area. The classroom is bright and stimulating with a good range of resources to provide for the seven areas of learning and development. Both have access to excellent outdoor area with a sand area and in the Wagtails also a water garden. We also have a woodland area at the end of our school field which the children use frequently.

We aim to plan to use our village and local areas regularly to extend the children's learning and understanding of their local environment.

### **Learning resources**

We review our resources annually to ensure that they are in a safe and clean condition, are stimulating and suitable to the needs of the children and are varied to cater to all learning styles and appropriate to the seven areas of learning.

## **Staff development and training opportunities**

We believe strongly in the importance of keeping our practice up to date. We therefore ensure that all staff working in the Foundation Stage attend the necessary courses and training as part of our school staff development programme. The needs of individual members of staff (teaching and non-teaching) are identified as a result of the school's performance management programme.

A governor is allocated to take a specific interest in the Foundation Stage and will discuss developments with the Foundation Stage Coordinator and the Headteacher.

**Approved by Staff April 2015**

**Approved by Governors May 15**

**To be reviewed May 16**