



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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1. Introduction

At Ursula Taylor C of E School, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order for them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age 5 have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.

A strong parent partnership will provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. As children commence their journey at Ursula Taylor C of E School, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment.

We promote a Christian ethos, and, by example and direct teaching, follow and promote the teachings of Jesus, whilst recognising that not all of our Staff, Families and Children, will be practising Christians.

We recognise that the personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and physically, plays a significant part in their ability to learn and achieve. We champion the importance of Christian, Human and British Values, placing them at the heart of our Ethos and treating them like a 'Golden Thread' that runs throughout our school.

2. Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences;
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals
- To support children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.

3. The Curriculum and Planning

We follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This clearly defines what we teach.

This is available the school office or to download at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf

As outlined in the 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.'

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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 their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**

As part of our practice we:

- Recognise that all children are unique and special.
- Understand that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Provide a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Foster and nurture children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Develop children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Teach them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encourage children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the prime areas:

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

Children are also supported through the 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

At Ursula Taylor C of E School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum. Some children moving into Year1 will follow the EYFS curriculum into the Spring Term.

Active Learning through Play

At Ursula Taylor C of E School, we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

In the EYFS setting at Ursula Taylor C of E School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore and take risks, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

We totally understand the importance of play in children's learning and development. We aim to provide learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.

We provide experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.

We provide effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches and involves children in learning how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents 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, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Ursula Taylor C of E School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children 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.

Parents as Partners and the Wider Context

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including Pre-schools, Nurseries and Childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Staff from Ursula Taylor C of E School visit Pre-schools and Nurseries that feed into us. We play with the children, and have 'transition talks' with key workers.

We visit children in their homes, recognising that this is a safe and comfortable setting where parents are more at ease discussing their worries or to clarify information they have been sent. Children also look forward to these visits and are eager to show their toys and engage in conversation.

In the Summer Term, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Foundation children spend three days in the Year 1 classes with their next teachers as part of their transition.

4. Assessment and Monitoring

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. All who are involved in the child's life are encouraged to contribute and discussions take place.

Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey on a computerised program called the 'Interactive Learning Diary', which is shared with parents.

Children's progress is tracked and, in the Autumn, and Spring term, parents are invited to attend consultation evenings to discuss the child's learning. A report is written in the Summer Term based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class teacher.

5. Resourcing

Careful consideration is given to resourcing the department and this is regularly reviewed and guided by the children's learning through play. We consider needs across the seven areas of learning. Open space that is not influenced by adults is now in place and children are in control of their learning style.

6. Equal Opportunities / Inclusion

In the EYFS all Practitioners we set high expectations for every child. We differentiate our planning to meet the needs of our more able children and for children who have low levels of prior attainment or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers should set all children targets which are deliberately ambitious (Development Matters, ELG and Primary National Curriculum 2014)

7. Governance

The provision, practices and effectiveness of EYFS at Ursula Taylor C of E School is monitored by the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body. Meetings are held frequently and all aspects of the provision and standards are monitored to ensure continuous improvement.

Policy due for review – February 2019