

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Reviewed & Updated April 2018

Aims of the policy

This policy establishes a framework which seeks to ensure that every child entering the Foundation Stage at William Davies makes the greatest possible progress in their learning and emotional growth.

This framework should help children to achieve the following outcomes: staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. We aim to promote independent learning in order to develop self-confidence and resilience.

This policy is compatible with and should be read alongside all other whole school policies.

Context

William Davies follows the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and we review our setting on a regular basis to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

Objectives of the policy

- To outline the learning environment we aim to create in Foundation Stage (FS) both indoors and outdoors.
- To outline the record keeping structures in the FS, and how these are used to track progress and improve outcomes.
- To outline the planning systems which aim to enable children to make progress.
- To outline the role of adults in enabling every child to make rapid progress and thrive in the FS.
- To outline how parents and carers can be involved.

Our principles and commitments

- To build our practice on the four guiding principles and themes of the EYFS: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, learning and development.
- To review and evaluate the FS and our practice regularly and develop action/development plans for improvement.
- To value all seven prime and specific learning and development areas of the EYFS: Prime areas – communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development; Specific areas – literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, expressive arts and design.
- To provide for learning through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities, and planned, purposeful play. Children will experience more practitioner led group-work as they progress through the FS.
- To support and promote equal opportunities and an inclusive setting by working in partnership with parents, carers and the wider community.
- To ensure equality of access to the EYFS curriculum for all children in the setting.
- To recognise the individuality, gifts, talents and abilities of each child and work to identify and support individual and special educational needs through a child-centred curriculum.
- To reflect the three characteristics of effective learning in our practice: playing and exploring (engagement); active learning (motivation); creating and thinking critically (thinking).

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Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

We follow the whole school policy for specific and special educational needs. The class-teacher and SENCO, with the involvement of parents and carers, will identify a child's specific needs and follow school and borough procedures for intervention and support.

Working in partnership

We are committed to working in partnership with other settings and with other agencies and providers which may be involved in a child's development.

Learning environment (indoors and outdoors)

Our learning environment supports children to work towards and achieve the statutory Early Learning Goals (ELGS) by the end of the FS.

- We aim to have a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and group work both indoors and outdoors. We recognise the importance of learning through play in the FS.
- Children have independent access to resources to support child-initiated learning and to encourage cooperative play and problem solving.
- Displays reflect our themes and the children's interests, and support learning.
- Linguistic and cultural diversity is valued and this is reflected through the provision, activities and displays.
- Our environment reflects the prime and specific areas of learning and development and we recognise that the areas are interconnected.

Teaching and learning in FS:

- helps children develop a positive sense of themselves and others;
- fosters independence;
- supports children's emotional well-being;
- extends children's learning and competence in communicating, understanding, speaking and listening, reading and writing;
- deepens children's thinking and questioning skills;
- develops children's numeracy skills and understanding in a broad range of contexts;
- supports children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the wider world;
- provides opportunities for children to be active and interactive and improve their skills of control, coordination, manipulation and movement;
- helps children begin to understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle;
- extends children's creativity.

Teaching strategies

Our school has a very high proportion of children who are learning English as an additional language, children who have special educational needs and children with a wide range of barriers to learning. To meet their wide range of learning needs and to overcome the passive nature of some children, it is essential to use interactive and visual teaching strategies to engage all children in their learning.

How the learning environment works is explained further in the appendices.

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Record keeping and assessment

Our assessment system is designed to monitor and track children's progress in prime and specific learning and development areas so that we can identify ways of moving children on, and improve outcomes. Children are assessed on entry to Nursery and Reception. Children are assessed at their mid and exit points in nursery, and at the end of each term in reception. At the end of the FS children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (EYFS Profile), and we report on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning: engagement, motivation and thinking.

We report to parents and carers on children's progress and achievements throughout the EYFS and provide a written report on progress against the ELGs at the end of Reception.

- We recognise that children develop at different rates and in different ways so our assessments identify individual learning needs, and the needs of specific groups.
- Assessments are used to plan, set priorities and identify gaps in teaching and provision.
- Observations of children are planned, but we also note spontaneous but important moments in a child's development.
- Any judgements made are based on skills, knowledge, understanding and behaviour that are demonstrated consistently and independently.
- Parents and carers are encouraged and supported to contribute to children's assessment.
- Outcomes of assessments are used to inform Action/Development plans.

How our assessment system works is explained in the appendices

Planning

We plan to enable children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the FS, so laying the foundations for future learning. Planning covers the prime and specific areas of learning and development, half-termly and weekly. We plan our learning goals, adult-led group work and key continuous provision. Nursery planning may reflect a greater emphasis on the prime areas of learning and development.

- Nursery and Reception plan together.
- We consider the needs of individual children informed by observation and with reference to tracking that has been carried out.
- We take account of key events and festivals.
- We refer to the document Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Early Education, 2012).
- We consider the three characteristics of effective learning.
- Our plans are flexible so that we can respond quickly to children's learning and development needs.
- We evaluate our activities, teaching and provision as part of our planning process.
- Annual, term and weekly plans are filed electronically on the Google Drive so that teachers can use them as a reference and so that they can be monitored.

Our planning is explained further in the appendices.

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Role of adults

Adults in FS have a crucial role to play in enhancing children's learning and development.

- We have a key worker system in place.
- We recognise the importance of relationships between adults and children based on mutual respect and trust.
- We have an agreed approach to our interactions with children.

Our approach to interacting with children is explained in 'Learning, Playing, Interacting' (DCSF 2009). See also the documents in the appendices.

Parents and carers

We encourage and value the contributions that parents and carers can make to their child's learning and development, and the assessment process.

- We aim for an inclusive and welcoming environment, reflecting and valuing different cultures and backgrounds.
- Information about the curriculum, activities, events and school policies is made available to parents.
- We have a key-worker system in place.

For more information about how we work with parents see the appendices.

POLICY DOCUMENT ENDS – SEE BELOW FOR APPENDICES

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Parents and carers

We build strong relationships with parents and carers through home visits, parents' meetings, workshops and newsletters to enable parents to become involved in their children's learning.

An open day is held for all new nursery parents and children at the end of the summer term. This is an opportunity for parents and children to visit nursery, join in activities and meet the staff. If children coming to our nursery are already in a setting, we visit them there during the summer term. In June and July parents and children due to start nursery are invited to attend pre-Nursery play sessions run by the nursery teacher. This is a further opportunity for the parents, children and teacher to get to know one another, and for the teacher to talk to parents informally about nursery expectations. Parents are invited to attend a seminar 'Preparing Your Child for Nursery'. In September, nursery staff make home visits to all nursery children. The purpose of the home visit is to observe children in their home environment and get to know children and parents. Registration forms are completed during the home visit. Children's admission to nursery is staggered to make the settling-in process easier. On day one the parent and child stay for one hour, on day two the parent leaves the child for one hour and on day three the child completes a full session. However, we are flexible in our approach and tailor settling-in to individual needs.

Many of our reception children attend our nursery, but if children have not attended our setting we carry out a home visit and arrange for them to visit our nursery and reception with their parents. An induction meeting and starting school seminar are held for reception parents towards the end of the summer term. Children do not start full-time reception immediately. We have a settling-period of shorter days.

Parents and carers are welcomed into our FS at the start of the day to settle their children and talk to staff, if necessary. Parents have access to their child's progress book. We have regular parents' evenings and parents' meetings. Parents are invited to half-termly 'drop-in' sessions when they can look at the progress book with their child. We encourage parents to complete 'wow sheets' to record any significant achievements or key moments in their child's development out of school. These are filed in the progress books. We hold seminars for parents on how children learn (nursery), learning to read (reception), mathematics in the early years (nursery and reception) and contributing to the assessment process (nursery and reception). Our website gives information about the curriculum and suggestions about how parents can support children in their learning. Parents are invited to participate in educational visits.

Learning and Planning

The FS Curriculum is effectively the prime and specific areas of learning and development: communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, literacy, mathematics, understanding the world, expressive arts and design. Teaching and learning in these areas should enable children in the Foundation Stage to make progress towards, and reach the Early Learning Goals. We plan across the prime and specific areas of learning and development in the

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medium and short term. Nursery planning and practice may reflect a greater emphasis on the prime areas of learning and development.

Foundation stage planning is theme-based – we have a new theme each half-term – we ensure our themes reflect children’s own interests, so they are flexible. Half-termly plans identify the themes and aspects of learning to be covered across the foundation stage. Nursery and reception produce their own specific weekly plans. Our weekly learning goals relate to the aspects of learning, Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Early Years Outcomes guidance (DFE, 2013), but learning goals are primarily based on our on-going assessments and observations of children’s achievements and outcomes, learning needs and interests which are discussed at phase meetings. In our planning we also consider how we are developing children’s skills and abilities in relation to the characteristics of effective learning.

Evaluation is an integral part of the planning process. Daily evaluation sheets are completed following small-group, adult-led teaching sessions. Informal discussions also take place on a daily basis (any key notes are made on the weekly plan), and evaluation is part of the weekly phase meeting.

The FS Leader and the Assistant headteachers are responsible for monitoring and overseeing planning. Following discussion, the FS Leader completes the half-termly plans. Class teachers are responsible for completing weekly plans. This includes planning for small group work. Outdoor learning is also planned for weekly, and the FS Leader is responsible for completing these plans.

A high quality learning environment is vital in the Foundation Stage so general provision is thought through and planned for. Children have access to indoor and outdoor resources Displays reflect what the children have been learning about, and are changed regularly.

Current FS themes (April 2018)

Autumn 1 All About me

Autumn 2 Celebrations, weather, performance

Spring 1 Our community, including transport and international week/day

Spring 2 Growing, Spring

Summer 1 Mini-beasts (traditional tales and rhymes)

Summer 2 Pets (nursery), farm animals (reception) (traditional tales and rhymes)

Behaviour

Behaviour management

As a school we follow the Golden Rules and these establish the framework for behaviour expectations in the FS. Behaviour is managed by using a range of strategies, for example:

Talking about and modelling appropriate behaviour;

Using positive praise;

Being consistent about expectations and boundaries.

If a child’s behaviour is persistently inappropriate we will remove them from an activity and they may need to stay with an adult for a short period.

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Timetables, Routines and Behaviour

Timetables and routines

Play, child-initiated and adult-initiated activities and small group work is evident throughout the day in the FS. Small group work and short whole-class sessions take place in nursery and reception. In nursery, practitioners each take two small groups per session, alternating groups week by week. In reception the teacher and teaching assistants take small groups, including daily phonics and maths sessions. As a child progresses through reception they are likely to take part in more adult-led activities in preparation for year 1.

It is vital that the learning environment is of high quality in nursery and reception so setting-up is carefully thought through and planned for. Resources are clearly organised and labelled so that children can access them easily.

Learning, Assessment and Tracking Progress

Tracking progress towards the Early Learning Goals

There are 17 statutory Early Learning Goals which children are expected to reach by the end of foundation stage. These goals cover the prime and specific areas of learning and development and are divided into aspects.

The prime areas

- Communication and language: listening and attention, understanding, speaking;
- Physical development: moving and handling, health and self-care;
- Personal, social and emotional development: self-confidence and self-awareness, managing feelings and behaviour, making relationships

The specific areas

- Literacy: reading, writing;
- Mathematics: numbers, shape, space and measures;
- Understanding the world: people and communities, the world, technology
- Expressive arts and design: exploring and using media and materials, being imaginative

This is effectively the foundation stage curriculum.

The Early Education non-statutory guidance document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2012) provides age-related statements (starting at birth) which identify the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes children should be demonstrating as they develop towards the Early Learning Goals. These are called the Development Matters Statements. Each aspect of learning has its own set of age-related statements divided into age bands. These are what we use to track children's progress throughout the Foundation Stage. These age-related statements are mirrored in the DfE non-statutory guidance document Early Years Outcomes (2013) and are described as 'typical behaviour'.

The age-bands cover quite a wide range, and so to help us measure progress we have developed a levels system. When we assess children we decide if they are working within a particular age band at an emerging, working or met level. On entry to nursery children should be emerging within the 30-50 months age band. Therefore their on-entry level should be at least William Davies 0 points (ie secure within the 22-36 months age band). On entry to reception, children should be emerging within the



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40-60+ months age band. Therefore their on-entry level should be at least William Davies 3 points (ie secure within the 30-50 months age band). By the end of reception a child should be at a secure level within the 40-60+ months age band ie William Davies 6 Points. Children should be making at least three levels of progress in a year. We find some of our children do not enter nursery at an age-expected level, so we refer to the earlier age bands to describe their level of attainment.

We assess the children in the prime and specific areas of learning after 15 sessions in our nursery (or reception class) and this is called the on-entry assessment. We assess the children again in the prime and specific areas of learning at their mid-point and exit-point in nursery. In Reception we assess children at the end of each term.

We also report on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning as they progress through nursery and reception

Nursery and reception teachers have responsibility for producing the data on the children in their classes, overseen by the FS Leader. Our tracking system enables us to see how many levels children have progressed. We are able to analyse data relating to the cohort as a whole and to specific groups in relation to the different areas of learning.

Note

The Development Matters / Early Outcomes Statements are not age-related 'goals' and should not be used as a checklist. Children will not necessarily progress sequentially through each statement. As from September 2012 we have taken a 'best-fit' approach when assessing children and assigning a level, based on professional judgements, informed by observation and evidence. This means we do not necessarily expect a child to have demonstrated all the 'typical behaviours' within a particular age-band in order to describe their level of attainment.

EYFS Profile

In accordance with statutory requirements, we complete the EYFS Profile for all children at the end of the FS. Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals, and data is submitted to the LA. It is the responsibility of the reception teacher to complete the EYFS Profiles. In accordance with statutory guidelines we judge whether the description within the Early Learning Goal best fits a child's learning and development. 'Best-fit' does not mean that the child has equal mastery of all aspects of the Early Learning Goal. In accordance with the Statutory Framework we provide the year 1 teacher with a commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.

Evidence which informs assessment

Each child in nursery and reception has a Progress Book where evidence of their learning and progress is kept. Class teachers, the nursery nurse and teaching assistants collect evidence in the form of work samples (including RWI books and writing books in Reception), photographs and short observations of things children say and do. Work samples are annotated and all evidence is dated. As far as possible, whatever a child says is written verbatim. It is noted whether what took place was adult or child initiated. Evidence is filed weekly in children's Progress Books. Evidence can also be collected through narrative observations when a child is observed for approx 15-20 minutes during a session. The daily evaluation sheets of adult-led group work also act as evidence of children's levels of understanding

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and attainment in relation to specific learning goals. The nursery and reception class teachers have responsibility for the Progress Books of all the children in their class overseen by the FS Coordinator.

Analysis of data

It is the responsibility of the FS leader and the Assessment Coordinator to analyse data and share outcomes with staff, the Headteacher and governors. Action points are drawn up on the basis of the outcomes and included in our Action/Development Plans.

Key-person system

One of the principles of the EYFS is that 'children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships'. We follow the requirement that each child in an early years setting should have a key person or key-worker.

Their role is

- to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs;
- to help the child become familiar with the setting;
- to offer a settled relationship with the child;
- to build a relationship with the child's parents.

It should be noted that a child's key-worker works as part of a staff team and does not build a relationship with a child or his/her parents to the exclusion of other adults in the setting. Key-workers continue to have responsibility to build relationships with and work with all children in a setting (including doing observations and collecting evidence of learning).

In reception the class teacher acts as key-worker for all the children, working flexibly and delegating some responsibilities to the teaching assistant as appropriate. The teaching assistant could, for example, take a key role in settling some children or building close relationships with them.

In nursery, practitioners act as key-workers to groups of children, taking on the responsibilities listed above.

All EYFS staff contribute evidence to children's progress books, and raise any issues regarding a child's progress or attainment at phase meetings. Overall responsibility for assessment and tracking is the class teacher's, overseen by the FS Coordinator.

Promoting Fundamental British Values in the EYFS

This aspect of our Early Years Foundation policy both reflects and supports the whole school Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Policy.

Overview

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage. Separately, the Counter Terrorism and Security Act also places a duty on early



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years providers “to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism” (the Prevent duty).

The following examples have been provided by 4Children. The DfE have confirmed that they are helpful examples.

Democracy: making decisions together

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness as cited in Personal, Social and Emotional Development: We encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging children to know their views count, value each other’s views and values and talk about their feelings, for example when they do or do not need help. When appropriate, we demonstrate democracy in action, for example, children sharing views in a group session with a show of hands. We support the decisions that children make and provide activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

Rule of law: understanding rules matter as cited in Personal Social and Emotional development

As part of the focus on managing feelings and behaviour: We ensure that children understand their own and others’ behaviour and its consequences, and learn to distinguish right from wrong. We negotiate rules and the codes of behaviour with the children, for example, to agree the rules about tidying up and ensure that all children understand rules apply to everyone.

Individual liberty: freedom for all

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness and people and communities as cited in Personal Social and Emotional development and Understanding the World: Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences and learning. We encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.

Mutual respect and tolerance: treat others as you want to be treated

As part of the focus on people and communities, managing feelings & behaviour and making relationships as cited in Personal Social and Emotional development and Understanding the World: We work to create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community. Our planning and practice is geared to supporting children to acquire a tolerance and appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions and share and discuss practices, celebrations and experiences. We encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other’s opinions. We promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example,



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sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping.

Staff will: Consistently and actively promote tolerance of other faiths, cultures and races. Challenge gender stereotypes, including routine segregation of girls and boys. Work to engage children and families with the wider community. Challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children or parents) that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths, beliefs and lifestyle choices.

Additional note on assessment in Nursery

Children attending Nursery for five terms are assessed as follows:

- *On entry assessment after 15 sessions*
- *Assessment at the end of their second term (ie July)*
- *Assessment at the start of their third term (informed by the end of second term assessment) ie the start of their 'nursery year'*
- *Assessment at mid-point in the nursery year*
- *Assessment at end point (pre-Reception)*

Children are assessed against age-related expectations.