



## SPR 5 Early Years Policy

Early Years Coordinator: Joanne Angell

### Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Stoke Prior 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 and as preparation for life.

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 and this is what we provide at Stoke Prior Primary School. Children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

All children begin Stoke Prior School with a variety of experiences and learning and have already learnt a great deal. It is essential that the practitioners working in reception build upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through ensuring that parents/guardians, support staff and the Early Years practitioners work together effectively to support children's learning and development. This is achieved by the sharing of information with preschools and parents/guardians and ensuring that each child's learning is a continuous journey.

### Aim

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Stoke Prior Primary School the aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve this. The EYFS principles which guide the work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

A Unique Child - every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. The commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; and health and well-being.

Positive Relationships – how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/ or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.

Enabling Environments – states that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context - transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

Learning and Development - recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

We aim to provide a broad, balanced, rich and stimulating curriculum and environment which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Stoke Prior School we aim to :

- *Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs*
- *Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage One and beyond*
- *Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development*
- *Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child progress*
- *Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence*
- *Work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions*
- *Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development*
- *Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive.*

## **Learning and Development**

The early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should acquire by the end of the reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the ‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ and the ‘Development Matters in the EYFS’ documents. These documents have been updated and the most up to date versions are available here: [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#) and [Development Matters - GOV.UK](#)

All 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 are called the Prime Areas.

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (C&L)
- Physical Development (PD)

There are then four *specific* areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

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

As well as the Prime and Specific areas, we also focus on the Characteristics of Learning. The ways in which a child engages with other people and their environment- playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically- underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

At Stoke Prior School we aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

## **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 do. We plan using topics which change regularly to keep interest. Children's ideas are taken into account in the planning stage at the beginning of the term and explored and extended during the term. Aspects of the Reggio Emilia approach are included in our planning and teaching, allowing the children to feel they have some control over the direction of their learning. We plan for purposeful-play, child-initiated and teacher-led activities.

## **Assessment, recording and monitoring**

At Stoke Prior School we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan

the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. We begin assessing from the moment they start school to allow us to form a Baseline Assessment. Assessments are completed through observations not a formal test. The outcome of Baseline Assessment along with information from parents and preschools will give the class teacher a clear indication of where each child is starting and they can then plan to continue their learning from an appropriate point.

A Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) has been used since September 2021. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment (15 minutes), taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. They complete a series of short activities covering Literacy, Language, Communication and Early maths.

#### Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations and focused observations and using questioning during child led and teacher led sessions.

#### Summative assessment

The EYFS Profile summarises all of the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements against the Early Learning Goals in each area. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

Parents receive an annual report that offers comments on their child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the general progress.

### **Learning through Play**

At Stoke Prior 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 through sustained shared thinking. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

## **Liaison with pre-school settings and induction**

The Reception teacher makes contact with preschool providers and visits prospective children in their settings. This allows the Reception teacher to gain an insight into the children's strengths/ weaknesses, likes/dislikes and behaviour before they begin school. The Reception teacher also uses any transfer records received to help plan appropriately for each child.

Prospective parents are always welcomed into school and given a tour with any questions being answered along the way. There is always an opportunity to visit the Reception classroom and meet the teacher. They will be given a school prospectus and an Early Years Handbook which outlines the curriculum and school routines.

All children have the opportunity to come and visit Stoke Prior School Reception class during the Summer Term. Four sessions are provided, one with parents and three on their own, two 1 hour sessions, one whole morning session and one afternoon session. These opportunities are provided to allow the children to get to know the staff, setting and other children before beginning school in September. Activities are provided which will lead to pieces of work being produced that will be displayed in the classroom when they start school in September. This helps them to feel safe and secure on their first day/ week in school as there are familiar things around them.

## **The Learning Environment**

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which encourages children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both inside and outside. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas including a Role-play area, book corner, outdoor area with sand, water and construction areas. Reading, Writing and Maths resources are included in all areas to help encourage these important skills to be developed and practised.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

## **Reception to Year One Transition**

At Stoke Prior School the Year One children are split between Monkey Puzzle Class (Yr/1) and Maple Class Y1/2. Each child is discussed and a decision is made based on the whole child, as to which class they will be best placed in. This allows the transition to be smooth and the children to easily continue learning from where they were at the end of their reception year, either in a more formal environment or in a more play-based curriculum. Any children

that have not reached the end of the EYFS are able to continue on this journey within the same environment (Monkey Puzzle Class) until such time they are ready to move onto the National Curriculum.

### **Home/School Links**

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians 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:

- Outlining the Reception curriculum to parents/guardians during the new parents meeting in September (after their children have been in school for 2 weeks). This meeting enables them to understand everything that happens during the day in school, how their children will be taught/learn and the value of supporting their child's learning at home. Resources are given out to help parents support their children at home the best they can.
- Sending home a termly class letter, informing parents/guardians of the learning that will be taking place at school. We also highlight our class page and the Phonics page on the school website, where parents can get more information.
- Holding several parent/guardian evenings a year.
- Operating an 'open door' policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Two or three themed afternoons a year where parents work with their children to learn and create together.
- Encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- Providing an annual written report in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.
- We use Tapestry to share class, group and individual learning with parents and carers. Tapestry is also used as a way of sharing learning at home and beyond the classroom with the teacher.

### **Equal opportunities**

At Stoke Prior School we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

## **Inclusion**

At Stoke Prior School we believe that all our children matter. We give all our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of the children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception Year and some will progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Children with Special Education Needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. Additional adult support may be provided, thus increasing adult/pupil ratio. Individual education plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the Trust's Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy. The Reception teacher will discuss these targets with his/her parents/guardians. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The schools SEN coordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

## **Safeguarding and Welfare**

The EYFS staff will take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. In the EYFS we follow the whole school Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and the whole school Behaviour Policy. We maintain records using My Concern and also record first aid incidents in the school record file. Staff in the EYFS have Safeguarding training alongside the rest of the school, as well as Paediatric first aid training.

Staff members will not use personal mobile phones or cameras when children are present. Staff may use a mobile phone in the staffroom during breaks and non-contact time. Mobile phones will be safely stored and in silent mode whilst children are present. Staff are provided with school devices to ensure that only school devices are used for taking photographs and videos of children to document a child's learning.

Photography policies and procedures are addressed in full in our Photography and Images Policy.

Reviewed by: Miss J Angell

Date: February 2025

Review: February 2028

Adopted by Governors:

Signed: .....