



**'Love, Laugh, Learn - walking with Jesus to life in all its fullness,
John 10:10.**

Abbey Infant School and Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"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.

In our school, all children join us at the age of two or three years old or in Reception at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five. We have a Squirrel room (2-3 year olds) and Owls room (preschool), a long with three Reception classes Willow, Maple and Sycamore.

In our Nursery and Reception classes children start part time for the first week in order for a calm, smooth and successful transition into school life. After this they then attend their typical Nursery/ school hours.

Four guiding principles shape the practice in our Early Years settings here at Abbey.

These are:

- 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** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

A Unique Child

At Abbey Infant School and Nursery 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 to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Abbey Infant School and Nursery are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give 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 our children. 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.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence; using Development Matters to ensure progress.
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Given opportunities for children's learning to be taken outside.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children.

Welfare

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

Positive Relationships

At Abbey Infant School and Nursery we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journey' on tapestry encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.

There are meetings for parents in Autumn and Spring term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year where a follow up meeting is offered to parents arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: reading/ phonics workshops, invitation on school trips, Sports Day etc;

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

Enabling Environments

At Abbey Infant School and Nursery we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Learning and development

The Nursery and Reception base are organised in a way that allows children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS bases have their own enclosed outdoor areas. These have a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for the children to continue to develop and reinforce their learning. It offers the children a chance to explore and use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Our setting is designed to stimulate the children's curiosity and imagination. We offer an indoor and outdoor continuous provision which offers the children the opportunity to explore, investigate and learn across all areas of the EYFS.

At Abbey Infant School and Nursery we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their own interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;

- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Here at Abbey we use the **Development Matters**, non-statutory curriculum guidance for the EYFS to support the delivery of the EYFS learning and development requirements.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the **prime areas**:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

We also support children in 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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led, adult directed and child initiated activities. An overview of each area of learning is set out below taken directly from the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By

commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive⁹ relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives⁷. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to

explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters.

In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe. Children learn by leading their own play and as the children grow older a gradual shift will lend itself to more adult led activities; preparing the children for Year 1.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around half termly themes or possible lines of enquiry. Learning objectives for these plans are based on 'Development Matters' statements. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs by following children's interests. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. It is an integral party of the learning and development process and involves practitioners observing children to understand levels of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations in Nursery and Reception are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journey's' on the Tapestry online journal. They also contain information provided by parents. In Reception, interactions with children allows the teacher/teaching assistant to respond to their own day to day observations about children's progress allowing professional discussion amongst staff on the 'next steps' for children.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support.

Here at Abbey we use ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) as an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves us knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In our interactions with children, we respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork therefore when assessing whether our children are at the expected level of development, we draw on our knowledge of the child and our own expert professional judgement.

Summative assessments we carry out here at Abbey are:

- Two year old progress check.
- The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception.
- In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals.

In both Nursery and Reception we assess the children across all areas of the EYFS termly based on a 'working at expected levels' or 'working below expected levels' or 'working well below expected' measure.

This supports us in identifying needs, gaps in learning and will support us with future planning and intervention.

Here at Abbey, parents and/or carers are kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development. We address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

We hold a formal parents evening in Autumn and Spring term. In Summer term parents receive a written report and are offered a meeting to discuss this report.

Transition to Year 1

To ensure the smooth transition to year 1 we plan carefully for our children:

- Some children will be given a Transition Booklet with photos of teachers, classroom, yard etc to be taken home and discussed with parents/carers.
- Year 1 staff organise their classrooms and provide resources so that the areas of learning are evident.
- Planning reflects early years practice wherever possible.
- Parents are informed of the year 1 curriculum and age expectations.
- Transition visits in Summer term and induction day.

Trips and Visits

We take as many opportunities to take the children outside of school. We believe by taking the children on trips or inviting visitors into school, enriches the Early Years curriculum.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

It is the responsibility of the EYFS coordinator to ensure these principles are being followed.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and subject coordinator will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

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