



Stonesfield Primary School
Learning together to achieve our best

Early Years Policy

Approved by governors: March 2022

To be reviewed: March 2024

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Close working partnership between the school and both families and local pre-school settings.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Department for Education's Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) [March 2021 & updated September 2021]¹.

At Stonesfield Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021:

- to provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- promote good health;
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- to ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

2.1 Keeping Children Safe

The Department for Education's *Keeping Children Safe in Education*² outlines the school's statutory duties in safeguarding children and this is our paramount priority. It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limitations and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

2.2 Good Health

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk or water to drink. Children have access to water at all times, which they can self-access from child accessible sinks. Children in Reception are encouraged to use these as a means of filling their personal water bottles which are provided by families.

2.3 Intimate Care

Stonesfield Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We are committed to ensuring that all staff responsible for intimate care of children and young people undertake their duties in a professional manner at all times. Parents will be requested to sign a consent statement allowing staff to provide intimate care if required.

Intimate care is defined as any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children and young people carry out for themselves, but which some are unable to do. Stonesfield Primary School recognises that some children may arrive at school with underdeveloped toilet training skills. Staff will work in close partnership with parents/carers and other professionals to share information and provide continuity of care.

2.3i Toileting and the Foundation Stage Profile

Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage is clear that the role of the adult involves supporting the child's whole development, particularly their Personal, Social and Emotional development including supporting the transition between settings. One of the Early Learning Goals for children to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage is to "dress and undress independently and manage their own personal hygiene". If a child accidentally soils or wets themselves, staff will encourage the child to change themselves and where necessary support them to change while encouraging each child to do as much for themselves as they can. Children will be supported to change in the EYFS toilet areas. Staff will supply clean clothes (to the best of their ability out of the 'spares box') and a carrier bag for any soiled clothing to send home at the end of the day.

2.3ii Parental responsibility

Prior to starting school, parents/carers will be reminded of the school expectation that pupils should be toilet trained before they start school. If a child is not fully toilet trained before starting school, parents/carers are requested to inform the school. A meeting will then be arranged prior to a start date; the child's needs will be discussed and appropriate support will be agreed. Parents of children who have regular toileting accidents will be required to provide spare clothes (to be kept on their child's peg in the cloakroom).

2.3iii Staff responsibilities with children who have a SEN and/or diagnosed medical need

Individual health care plans may be drawn up for particular children as appropriate to suit the circumstances of the child. These plans include a risk assessment to address issues such as moving and handling, personal safety of the child and the carer and health. There is an expectation that medical documentation will be supplied by parents /carers in order for the school to provide assistance with intimate care. The school may also seek advice from the School Nurse and other agencies.

3. Introduction to the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Stonesfield Primary School children are

a) admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. Pupils are offered a full-time place from the September. *Applications for Reception are made online via Oxfordshire County Council.*

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.' Early Years Foundation Stage Profile – Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Early childhood is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. At Stonesfield Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Staggered start in September

Children are entitled to a full time place in a state-funded school reception class from the September following their fourth birthday. At Stonesfield we offer full-time provision from the first day of term. However if parents believe a staggered start would be beneficial for their child a request can be made to the headteacher before the start of term. This would be a short-term arrangement to assist with the settling in process.

4. Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 statutory framework of the EYFS. We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Stonesfield Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will establish firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.
- Developing characteristics of effective learning.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;

- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

Our curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified within the statutory framework.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS (Early Learning Goals). 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.

The three Prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

School ensures that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- 1. Playing and exploring – children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.**

'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.'

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, 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.

- 2. Active learning – children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.**

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

3. Creating and thinking critically – we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

'When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.'

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the indoor and outdoor learning environments freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

4.1 Planning

The seven areas of learning in the statutory framework provide the basis for planning in EYFS. Teachers plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Staff take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. In the final term staff planning takes into account the Early Learning Goals to ensure children are achieving the expected level of development in each of the 7 areas.

The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are taken from Development Matters³ – non-statutory guidance for EYFS. Planning is based around a theme that allows activities, phonics, maths and reading to be taught on a daily basis. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic often occurs in the moment as a vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning. Therefore, staff respond to the needs, achievement and interests of the children. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and beyond.

4.2 Teaching and Learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

The features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;

- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children’s play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children’s progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

5. Assessment

During the first term in Reception, the teacher assesses the starting points of each child to form a baseline assessment. This baseline is in the form of the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)⁴ and staff observations throughout the first 4-6 weeks. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

At Stonesfield Primary School ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. Observations also form a basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children’s Learning Journeys. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents/carers.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils’ progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child’s level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children’s learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in EYFS takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the EYFS Profile is a statutory requirement.

At the end of the final term in EYFS the school sends a summary of these assessments to Oxfordshire County Council. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

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

6. Working with parents

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open events and induction meetings.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their childcare provision prior to their starting school.
- Providing a handbook of information about starting school at Stonesfield Primary School.
- Giving parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in our Reception Class over planned induction visits before starting school.
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if EYFS staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through the Home-Link Book, online observation system (Tapestry), school website and school newsletters.
- Publishing a termly Curriculum Overview that details the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the term or half-term.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings and parent workshops about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' with parents/carers and valuing the ongoing contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents.

At Stonesfield Primary School the class teacher acts as the key person for each child and is the primary point of contact for parents/carers. However all staff in EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At Stonesfield Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS Lead will carry out monitoring of EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The EYFS link governor of The Governing Body will also be part of this process.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the EYFS Lead and Headteacher every 2 years.

References

1. Department for Education's Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) [March 2021]
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf
2. Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education [September 2021]
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1021914/KCSIE_2021_September_guidance.pdf
3. Department for Education's Development Matters [March 2017 updated July 2021]
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2>
4. Standards and Testing Agency: Reception Baseline Assessment: information for parents
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-baseline-assessment-information-for-parents>