



# Pashley Down Infant School

*Learning at Pashley is an amazing adventure*

## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY**

Reviewed/Adopted:      January 2023

Next Review:              January 2025

*Following the Lockdown that began in March 2020 this policy should be read with the understanding that should the school need to initiate safety procedures to reduce the risk of spreading the virus it will do so as the first priority. Therefore there may be adjustments that need to be made within this policy and every other policy that is held by the school. Please read the school's risk assessment for further details and liaise with the Senior Leadership team if the crisis has affected part or parts of this policy implementation and you have concerns or queries about its impact.*

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## 1. Introduction

“Reception is the most important year. It should provide pupils with a strong foundation for the rest of their time in school.”

### **Effective Primary Teaching Practice 2016 (Teaching School Council, November 2016)**

At Pashley Down Infant School we believe Early Years Education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic approach that encompasses all learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Pashley Down Infant school. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching staff and support staff.

In the policy the ‘setting’ refers to the Early Years educational provision at Pashley Down Infant School. This is available to children who enter EYFS from September of the academic year in which they turn five years old. In the policy the term ‘practitioner’ refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

## 2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

We believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, to enable them to achieve their full potential. We aim to support each child’s welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- *Recognising that ‘every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.’ (Early Years Framework)*
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates – physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Fostering and nurturing children’s self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feeling in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children’s independence and decision making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children’s understanding of social skills and the values and codes of good behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions that differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children’s learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play that reflect children’s personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences that build on children’s existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in range of environments, inside and outside.

## 3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'. This document is a principled approach to Early Years education.

#### **4. The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas, which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are closely interlinked. This ensures delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum, which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value. We believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education.

#### **5. Active learning through play**

##### ***Learning at Pashley is an Amazing Adventure***

At Pashley Down Infant School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. The children learn throughout the school using the REAL project approach. Projects include memorable experiences such as a visit from the police or a trip to the local library.

We recognise the importance of children's play as an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in All Areas of Development. Play is a powerful motivator, encouraging children to be creative and develop their ideas, understanding and language. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

#### **6. Assessment and Record Keeping**

*The Early Years Framework states that 'EYFS seeks to provide a secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.'*

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effective practice in the EYFS setting. Regular, planned and focussed assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs.

All practitioners are involved in observing children and use observation information to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

The 'Tapestry' program along with paper learning journeys are used to continuously monitor and record children's progress over the academic year in all areas of development within the EYFS Framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence, observations and videos. Each class also gathers pupil voice and evidence in a floor book, which shows class learning. Parents are encouraged to share achievements from home on Tapestry to allow practitioners to gather a picture of the whole child.

Baseline assessments are carried out using the statutory baseline tests and the EYFS Profile during the children's first six weeks upon entering the setting. Judgements are made on the children's development and are based on the test results and practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in activities across all Areas of Learning and Development. This is supported by detailed information provided by parents shared during the early autumn meetings with staff.

## **7. Planning**

*'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.'* (Early Years Framework)

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Medium term planning details events and significant learning themes including celebrations. It may also give indication to any key areas that need targeting as noted through observations and analysis of assessment.

Planning is holistic and always has the child at the centre. Practitioners plan as teams and are led in discussion and conversations by the lead of EYFS, the Headteacher. During this planning time detailed conversations about the learning and success of the previous week are held along with identification of interests and needs of individuals. Planning has an underlying theme and activities are closely linked to this in order to ensure high levels of engagement and motivation.

The weekly plan for the children in EYFS will always cover all areas of learning and development and encompass the whole environment, both indoors and out. It will identify opportunities for English and Maths in more detail as well as key focus groups and interventions. Adult guided activities are also planned in and have a key learning focus with all children in the EYFS experiencing daily phonics, English and Maths activities. Role play and imaginative play is always considered and areas are adapted to follow children's interests and learning in class. Continuous provision (resources and experiences that are constantly available) is reviewed and adapted where necessary, depending on the varying needs of the children.

Additionally, children will have planned activities from the school schemes in PE, RE, PSHE and music, along with trips to the Pashley Woodland and small group trips to the Pashley Farm and class allotments at different points in the year.

## **8. Parents as Partners**

*'Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers'. (Early Years Framework)*

At Pashley Downs Infant School we recognise the vital importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, and that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators and believe that parents should be partners in the learning and development of their child. We therefore provide parents with access to the child's online learning journey through the creation of a 'ParentShare' account. By logging on they can view electronic journal entries of their child, along with the curriculum reference and assessment, therefore parents are regularly kept informed of their child's developmental stage. Alongside these 'virtual' evidence tools we also recognise the importance of maintaining a physical learning journal for each child. These incorporate evidence of learning that children have achieved through the physical work itself, pupil voice and practitioner observations. With evidence from the program 'Tapestry', and the physical learning journal, the parents are kept up to date on their child's individual progress.

Parents can respond to journal entries from practitioners, giving a two-way learning conversation, or upload their own observations, photographs and videos of their child's home learning or experiences. This provides the school with a wider perspective on each child's development.

Thorough the initial transition sessions, and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight in to the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes).

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting though regular project letters, the school website, parent workshops, the EYFS forum, reading records and informal chatting at the end of the day. All parents also have access to class dojo which allows the teacher to share whole class messages and parents and staff can message individually. All of this, not only provides information on current learning and themes but also gives suggestions on how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting.

Parents are invited to attend parents' consultations during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting as well as giving time for detailed conversation about the baseline assessments that have been carried out. Another consultation takes place during the spring term when practitioners will feedback further on children's learning and develop progress.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. From Term 1 there are opportunities for them to help with class activities on a weekly basis such as reading with children, along with educational visits, parent talks and offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents are invited into the setting on

other occasions such regular drop ins, special events, assemblies and project events where children show their work in a variety of ways.

Welcome meetings, EYFS forums and specific parent workshops also run through the year by practitioners. This enables parents to have more information on both the curriculum and ways in which they can help at home. Parents are always welcomed in to the school to discuss any specific concerns they may have.

## **9. Liaison with nurseries and pre-school settings**

With an intake of 90 children across three classes, we aim to balance the classes though liaison with pre-school settings. During the summer term we liaise with nurseries, playgroups and directly with parents to ensure the classes are balanced in terms of social skills, cognitive development, EAL needs and Special Educational Needs.

Liaison takes place through visits, telephone calls and emails. We also have up to date assessments from pre-school settings which highlight where children are in their progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

## **10. Induction**

Before starting at Pashley Down Infant School all parents are invited to a welcome afternoon in which they can speak to practitioners, hear more about the year ahead and view the setting. Parents are offered a home visit. All children are invited to a taster session with their new teacher and their new class peers. The purpose of this visit is for the children to meet their new adults and start to become more familiar with the setting and environment whilst still having their parents on hand.

Parents are given an induction booklet to complete and return to the school before the beginning of Term 1. At the beginning of Term 1 the school invites all parents to visit the school and meet with the class teacher individually. In these visits the teacher will spend time building relationships with both the child and parents, along with gathering information about the child's experiences. There is also time for an informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs are distributed to parents, detailing school routines and expectations. Once all the children have started, we hold a workshop for all parents.

Settling in is a flexible process and we work alongside the children and families closely during this period and staff are ready to adapt to the needs of individuals where necessary.

The children have a staggered entry over a two week period, in which they experience school life with half of their class; this induction period also gives practitioners the opportunity to settle the children into their new environment. The children attend school for morning sessions only to allow them time to settle into the environment without the pressures of a full day. The children then stay for lunch and are supported by the practitioners during this time. Every effort is made to make the children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about the school. We recognise that *'children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships'* and that these begin to develop during these transition sessions.

## **11. Equal opportunities**

*'EYFS seeks to provide - equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.'* (Early Year Framework)

All practitioners at Pashley Down Infant School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within our EYFS setting.

## **12. Inclusion in the EYFS (Also see the inclusion policies)**

In the school there is also specialist Speech and Language support, children are referred to this from other agencies. Targeted speech support is provided, this regular intense therapy gives the children accelerated progress towards speech and language goals.

## **13. Safeguarding**

Safety of the children is paramount and there are a lot of regular parent helpers at the School. For safeguarding purposes DBS checks will be carried out on all volunteers. By checking all volunteers teachers can be certain of who is and isn't DBS checked, there is no uncertainty as to which helpers are and which helpers are not DBS checked.

The school currently has three trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), in line with the schools Safeguarding policy and Code of Conduct.

**Key person** - Each child in EYFS will be assigned a key person, their class teacher. This role will help to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. All practitioners in the EYFS ensure safety and suitability of premises and equipment by regular checks of provision.

**Photographs** - Children have photographs and videos taken to evidence of their achievements for developmental records. All staff, visitors, volunteers and students are not permitted to use their own mobile phones to take or record any images of children. The school obtains parental consent to take photographs and use cameras, video recorders and iPads and upload evidence to each individual child's secure 'Tapestry' account. All practitioners are equipped with an iPad and these are password protected. Often photographs may contain other children in the background, parents are made aware of this and given the opportunity to opt out if they wish. Cameras and mobile phones are prohibited in the toilet.