

# Windlesham Village Infant School

## Early Years Policy Statement



Date of review: June 2022    Next review date: June 2024

### Rationale:

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a distinct stage of education for children from zero to five years. The early stages will be covered in nurseries and through child minders. The final year of this stage is covered while children are in Reception, from the age of 4.

‘Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.’ (Development Matters)

‘Children develop in the context of relationships and the environment around them. This is unique to each family, and reflects individual communities and cultures.’ (Development Matters)

At Windlesham Village Infant School, we greatly value the importance of the EYFS in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. We recognise the importance of providing a positive start to children’s school life, developing strong relationships with children and their parents/carers.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant guidance and legislation to ensure that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities, which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents/carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. This allows children to develop a love of learning and curiosity about the world around them. We believe that valued and respected children will develop resilience and self-confidence, as well as a positive attitude to future relations and learning. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children’s readiness for the next stage of their education, and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

Learning for young children goes on everywhere, not just in planned activities but also in everyday tasks such as when children wash their hands, play in the playground and have their snacks. The curriculum in the EYFS cannot be organised into neatly packaged sections: opportunity for learning exists everywhere.

For this reason, Reception children must have the opportunity to learn in different environments (both indoors and outdoors) and in the context of different relationships and social settings such as child-initiated activities, adult-led tasks and adult-guided activities.

At Windlesham Village Infant School children have opportunities to develop the following skills:

- respecting others
- listening to others and responding appropriately
- talking effectively to others
- exploring new objects or ideas
- taking part in new experiences
- practising newly-acquired skills
- recreating experiences
- applying skills

- experiencing challenges
- learning to take risks
- developing persistence
- developing independence
- beginning to form strategies to solve problems.

And most importantly they will have fun and often not be aware that as they play they are learning.

### Principles (EYFS Statutory Guidance)

The EYFS is based on 4 principles which shape our practice:

- 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 needs and interests and help them build on their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- **Learning and development** is important. Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

To put these principles into practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.

At Windlesham Village Infant School, we recognise that:

- Every child is unique and therefore needs to develop as an individual, in his/her own way and at his/her own pace
- Children need to make choices and experience success, risk and failure
- Children need to learn to understand and cope with emotions
- Children learn from first hand experiences (active learning)
- Children need to develop socially and emotionally with others to be able to:
  - Make good relationships with others.
  - Develop consideration and respect for others.
  - Learn a sense of responsibility.
  - Gain self-confidence, independence and learn self-control.

### A Unique Child

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, as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, to encourage and to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### Inclusion

All practitioners at Windlesham Village 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 the EYFS setting at Windlesham Village Infant School.

## Learning and Development - Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

We follow the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and Development Matters document.

The curriculum for Early Years is organised into 7 areas of learning. There are 3 Prime and 4 Specific areas. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The Prime areas are crucial for engaging and promoting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to form relationships and thrive. The Prime areas are strengthened and applied through the Specific areas.

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- **Communication and language:**
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- **Physical development:**
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- **Personal, social and emotional development:**
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- **Literacy:**
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- **Mathematics:**
  - Numbers
  - Numerical patterns
- **Understanding the world:**
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world
- **Expressive arts and design:**
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

In organising and implementing educational programmes, the school will ensure that a broad range of activities and experiences are planned, having regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- **Playing and exploring** (being curious and asking questions) – children become engaged and investigate and experience things, use what they know in their play and are willing to try new things, the confidence to 'have a go'.
- **Active learning** (being motivated and resilient) – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and use what they already know to learn new things, and develop strategies for doing things.

Learning takes place through a range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children take part in whole class and small group learning opportunities throughout the day with a variety of adults in a variety of settings (both inside and outside). They also have opportunities to explore, test their own ideas and embed learning of previous skills through their play in 'free flow' (self-initiated activities.)

### Adult-led activities

These can be whole class, small or large groups or for individual children. These activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of the children. Through these activities new skills are taught and modelled and children can practise these skills or develop their understanding in a supported way.

### **Adult-initiated activities**

These activities are carefully planned to meet the needs of children but the children have some choice and may develop their own line of enquiry.

### **Child-Initiated activities**

These are activities that children select and carry out themselves. They may use one resource or a range. It is an opportunity for them to follow their own interests and reinforce skills they are learning. It is during this type of play that children really show what they understand and are capable of independently. It is through observing this type of play that the adults can adapt planning to suit the children's ever-developing needs.

### **The importance of play**

At Windlesham Village Infant School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting encourages learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is 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 to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Windlesham Village Infant School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

### **The Learning Environment**

The learning environment is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn independently in a safe and interactive environment.

Children have access to an enclosed outdoor environment, and daily access to the outdoor environment is planned, unless circumstances, such as the weather, would make outdoor activity inappropriate and unsafe.

These areas include role play, small world, writing, creative activities, maths, construction, malleable play, reading and investigation. Children have access to both the inside and outside environment throughout the day. The outdoor area, alongside the pond area, field and copse, are equally important with many children choosing to learn outside. The children have access to a range of activities including construction, role play, sand and water play. There is also opportunity to develop gross motor skills through the use of the trim trail, climbing wall, large construction, bikes, scooters and more. This 'continuous provision' is supplemented with additional resources throughout the year to stimulate and motivate the children and take learning forward.

We provide the opportunity to take part in Forest School sessions where children get the opportunity to develop their confidence, problem solving and team working skills in a safe and fun environment.

### **Staffing**

At Windlesham Village Infant School we acknowledge the need to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by knowledge and experience of how children develop and learn. The Reception team consists of a skilled teacher and classroom support assistants, all working closely together with parents/carers to ensure positive relationships are built with all children to enable them to develop confidently and grow in their own unique way.

Due to the nature of our curriculum and the fact that opportunities to learn are everywhere, adults working within Early Years need to be flexible and able to think on their feet. They need to be able to respond appropriately to children, informed by knowledge and experience of how children learn and develop. For this reason, all Early Years staff are involved in training, team building and regular staff meetings.

At Windlesham Village Infant School, we believe young children need adults who:

- Help foster their curiosity and enthusiasm
- Observe and listen to them
- Have high expectations of them
- Enjoy being learning with them
- Are good role models both in the way we treat others and as lifelong learners

### Safeguarding and welfare

All necessary steps are taken to keep the children in our care safe and well. Any safeguarding or welfare issues will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and all members of staff in the EYFS are required to read this policy as part of their induction training.

The DSL is **Mrs Ezzard** (Headteacher). The Deputy DSL is **Miss Leggett** (EYFS Lead/Deputy Headteacher).

The DSL is responsible for safeguarding children and liaising with local children's services as appropriate. The Deputy DSL will undertake the duties of the DSL in their absence, but overall responsibility for safeguarding will remain with the DSL. The DSL and Deputy DSL will undertake child protection training as required. Staff will receive safeguarding training that enables them to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding issues, and recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect.

### Health and safety

The school will promote the good health of children in the EYFS, including the promotion of good oral health.

The EYFS lead will report any significant accident or injury (i.e. head bumps) involving a child to their parents/carer on the day it occurs, and any first-aid treatment administered to a child will also be reported to their parents/carer. Accidents and injuries will be recorded in an accident book. The headteacher will report any serious accident, illness, injury, or death of a child whilst in the school's care to Ofsted as soon as is reasonably practicable, but within 14 days of the incident occurring. Local child protection agencies will also be notified.

Only medicine prescribed to a child by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist will be administered. The school's Administering Medication Policy outlines the procedures for administering medicines. The headteacher will notify Ofsted of any incidents of food poisoning affecting two or more children within 14 days of the incident. Information about any dietary requirements, preferences, food allergies and any special health requirements a child has will be recorded. Fresh drinking water is available at all times.

### Home/school Partnership

At Windlesham Village Infant School we recognise that parents/carers are a child's first educator and the importance of building a strong link between home and school so we can work in partnership for the benefit of the child. It is important that parents/carers continue to play a key role in their child's education once they have begun school. The strength of the partnership and parents'/carers involvement is encouraged by:

- A home visit before their child starts
- Ensuring a welcoming atmosphere at school for parents/carers
- Consistency between home and school in expectations for learning and behaviour
- Clear communication about school aims, procedures, routines etc. through weekly parent/carer letters and other whole school communications
- Regular opportunities to talk to staff, both formally at parent/carer meetings and informally on the gate before or after school
- Ensuring parents/carers understand the stage of development their child has reached through parent/carer meetings and the end of year school report
- Inviting parents/carers in to volunteer in their child's class
- Inviting parents/carers to become involved in school life through FOWVIS and activities like Family Learning sessions or Sports Day.

## Planning

Careful planning of the curriculum is crucial. With effective planning we recognise the importance of:

- The whole child: spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual, and moral development are interrelated
- Self-motivation, resilience and the nurturing of learning behaviours
- Young children learn best through experiencing things and trying them out
- Previous knowledge as a starting point
- The potential of every child
- The adults and the children with whom a child plays and works are of central importance
- Children learning continuously whether from planned events or through spontaneous experiences

At Windlesham Village Infant School, the Reception staff plan and produce:

- **Long term plans** - ensuring full curriculum coverage as indicated by the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- **Medium term plans** - topic based with suggested activities for each half term.
- **Short term plans** - Weekly timetables and specific objectives for each week based on the 7 areas and characteristics of learning to ensure a balanced curriculum. Daily activities and deployment of support staff are determined after evaluation of the previous day's activities and individual responses.

We use the Development Matters (DfE, 2021) document to support planning. This breaks each area of learning down into age related steps of development working towards the early learning goals which most children are expected to meet by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

All planning is shared, evaluated and adapted as and when necessary. The areas of learning and development are covered through a range of topics. All plans include opportunities for outdoor learning, learning from first hand experiences, learning from the world around them and from stories. All learning is carefully planned to act as a building block to learning in Key Stage 1.

Educational visits within the local community and further a field are also planned, where appropriate, to support children's learning within the classroom and external visits are encouraged to visit the class, wherever possible, linked to topics.

## Assessment

Assessment in Reception is ongoing throughout the year. It is used to inform planning, track children's progress and identify next steps in individual children's learning and development.

Within the first six weeks of school, the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is completed with all children. This is a statutory requirement. Windlesham Village Infant School staff also complete their own baseline assessments alongside the RBA to identify children's starting points in all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Throughout the year staff make observations of children while they are engaged in a range of child-initiated and adult-led activities. On a day to day basis these observations are used to plan children's next steps. They are also used to build a picture of whether children are on track or not on track in relation to the Development Matters statements and at the end of the year to assess against the early learning goals (ELGs).

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for each child, where they are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals. A child is deemed to be 'On track' with a Good Level of Development (GLD) in their learning and therefore ready for Year 1 if they achieve each of Prime Areas plus Literacy and Mathematics.

## Reporting

At Windlesham Village Infant School we operate an open-door ethos in the Early Years Foundation Stage and all parents/carers are encouraged to discuss with us any matter relating to their child throughout the year.

More formal reporting times are as follows:

- **October and February:** Parent/carer interviews to discuss progress and to set targets for the rest of the year.

- **July:** End of Year Reports. Parents/carers are welcome to arrange an interview to discuss their child's end of year report.

### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Observation, as well as formal and informal assessment, will indicate potential special needs. Needs that are greater than those which can be met in the normal classroom situation will be met within the framework of the school's SEND policy.

With this support, all children are able to participate in the curriculum to their individual level. Parents/carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school and are actively consulted about the provision made for their child.

The school uses the Surrey County Council guidance: 'Intimate care and toileting – Guidance for Early Years settings and schools' (updated in January 2017) as the basis of its intimate care policy along side guidance from the school nursing team. At Windlesham Village Infant School we recognise that achieving continence is one of many milestones that children will reach. We also recognise that all children are individuals and not all children may have reached this milestone by the time they start school. When support is required, staff will show sympathy and compassion towards the individual to help maintain the child's own self-esteem. Time needed to change a child should be used as a positive learning experience. It may take 10 minutes or more to change a child, but this is not dissimilar to the time allocated to working with a child on an individual learning target.

### Transition from Nursery/Child Minder to School and Induction

At Windlesham Village Infant School, we recognise that starting school can be an anxious and challenging time for both the child and their parents/carers. We want children to be excited about starting school and confident to come in. We therefore plan this time carefully to support children and families to it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle quickly and happily.

To ensure the best transition we make sure following things happen:

- A member of the Early Years staff will either visit or telephone the child's keyworker at nursery or child minder to discuss the individual child and how best to support them when they come to school.
- Induction meeting for new parents/carers (May) to inform parents/carers of transition process, expectations of school, routines etc.
- Classroom session for parent/carer and child (June) – children have the opportunity to visit our setting with their parents/carers to explore our environment and resources. The children will spend time in their new classroom while the parents/carers have the opportunity to gain information from the headteacher and meet other parents/carers
- Story session (July) – this session is an opportunity for the children to visit the school again and become more confident in the setting
- In September we have a staggered start over the 1st 3 weeks including:
  - Week 1 – staggered intake – children stay until 12
  - Week 2 & 3 – all children in every day until 12 – 6 children each day stay for lunch and the afternoon session
  - Week 4 – all children stay all day
- 'Meet the Teacher' session for new parents/carers to visit the class and continue to receive general information about the school day and how the class is run
- Induction coffee morning for new parents/carers and carers to give support and information about the EYFS curriculum and how to support children at home

We encourage parents/carers to come and discuss any concerns they may have with staff as soon as they can to ensure we are able to reassure them and help resolve any problems or worries they may have. The staggered start in September ensures we are able to build strong relationships with the individual children and support them to explore their new environment in smaller groups.

### Transition from Reception Class to Year 1

We recognise that at the end of Early Years it is important to support the children as they move up to Year 1. During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents/carers, teachers and support staff with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress

against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes all relevant records held by the school, discussions with parents/carers, and any other adults whom the teacher or parent/carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Being a small school the children know all the teachers and support staff through play times and assemblies. However, in the second half of the summer term the children will have the opportunity to:

- Visit their new Year 1 class, meeting their teacher and support staff
- Complete a variety of transition learning to help them reflect upon the year they have had in school and think about what is to come in Year 1
- Extra visits to Year 1 are put in place to support children who may have extra anxiety about transition.