

Gastrells Community Primary School

Early Years Foundation stage Policy

Adopted November 2018

Review November 2021

Early Years Foundation Stage

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Gastrells Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and as preparation for life.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. The majority of children begin at Gastrells with a variety of experiences and learning and have already learnt a great deal. It is essential that the practitioners working in reception build upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through ensuring that parents/carers (parents), support staff and the early years practitioners work together effectively to support children's learning and development. This is achieved by the sharing of information with pre-schools and parents/carers and ensuring that each child's learning is a continuous journey.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and having positive social, emotional and physical well-being. At Gastrells the aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We follow the EYFS statutory framework (2017):

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The EYFS seeks to provide:
 - quality and consistency in all early years settings, 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 individual child and are

- assessed and reviewed regularly partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

4. The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The learning and development requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in all early years settings
- the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five)
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)

5. The safeguarding and welfare requirements cover the steps that providers must take to keep children safe and promote their welfare.

Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- children develop and learn in different ways (see “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.9) and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

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

At Gastrells we will achieve this through:

- providing a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- providing a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- providing opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- using and valuing what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enabling choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- working in partnership with parents and valuing their contributions, providing opportunities to share in their child's learning through the use of Tapestry online learning journeys.
- ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development
- providing experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive

Learning and Development

The early learning goals (the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should acquire by the end of the reception year) and the educational programmes (the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children) are set out in the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" document.

There are 7 areas of learning and development for the Foundation Stage.

All areas are equally important and interconnected.

3 areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These are the **Prime Areas** which are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – self Confidence, self awareness, managing feelings and behaviour, making relationships
- **Communication and Language** – listening and attention, understanding, speaking
- **Physical Development** – moving and handling, health and self-care

There are also 4 Specific Areas which are the areas through which the Prime areas are strengthened and applied and they are:

- **Literacy** – Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers and Shape, Space and Measures
- **Understanding the World** – People and Communities, The World, Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring and using media and materials, Being Imaginative.

At Gastrells we believe these seven areas are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children’s learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do.

Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All practitioners who work in reception at Gastrells are involved in this process.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

- We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six half terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to give a broad and balanced coverage.

Medium Term Planning

- We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for ICT. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

- We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

At Gastrells we follow the early learning goals and additional statements set out in the "Primary Framework for Literacy and Mathematics" ***Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics: helping children to achieve age-related expectations – securing level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2*** when planning for Communication and Language, Literacy and Mathematics.

In the moment planning

We allow for child initiated, real time, learning through play based on capturing the interest of a child at the current time. Careful observations by EYFS staff is key to the in the moment planning approach – opportunities to seize the moment when a child shows a level of interest and curiosity that can be drawn out and then enhanced and built upon need to be recognised.

Staffing and Organisation

Gastrells is a one form entry school with mixed age classes in some year groups. We maintain an adult/pupil ratio of 1:15 within the reception year. Where appropriate we deploy additional staffing.

The EYFS teachers liaise with the teaching assistants, regularly involving them in planning, preparation and assessment.

We are always aiming to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding and so all practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in service and local cluster group training.

Practitioners also conduct and attend in house in house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At Gastrells we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed

decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

In EYFS at Gastrells we use online learning journeys and observations through the Tapestry app allowing for photographs, videos and text to be saved at any point throughout the school day and shared with parents/carers. These observations then contribute to each child's EYFS profile and allow for individual next steps to be implemented.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations recorded on Tapestry or Insight, assessment on entry, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents. Each child has an individual Early Years Profile which we add to continuously throughout the academic year. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking our medium and short term planning.

Summative assessment

The completed EYFS profile includes a short commentary on the pupil's skills and abilities in relation to the characteristics of effective learning. It summarises children's progress towards the early learning goals. All practitioners in the Foundation Stage contribute to the profile and the class teachers attend the local cluster group moderation.

Children are also tracked using the school tracking system (Insight) which enables staff to set and monitor targets for each child's learning.

For each ELG, it must be judged whether a pupil is:

- meeting the level of development expected at the end of the reception year (expected)
- exceeding this level (exceeding) or
- not yet reaching this level (emerging)

For further information see the Assessment Policy.

The Head teacher monitors teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage.

The foundation leader monitors teaching and learning across the foundation stage each year and analyses EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the head teacher.

Learning through play

“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1. **“Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage - Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five – April 2017**

At Gastrells we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children’s learning through planned play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and through sustained shared thinking.

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. We aim for there to be free flow between indoor and outdoor learning as often as possible and hope to continue to increase opportunity for this.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, writing area, maths activities and challenges, listening area, technology area, creative corner, builder’s tray, sand, water, sensory garden, digging and growing area, music, stage or performing area, construction, small world and puzzles. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

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

Liaison with pre-school settings and induction

At Gastrells we have developed close links between local playgroups and nurseries. During the summer term, preschool children, who will be starting school in September, make visits to the reception classes for play and stay sessions and story times. The children are given a booklet about our school prior to them joining the

reception class. The reception teacher also makes contact with other preschool providers and will visit prospective pupils.

Prospective parents can visit the school at any time and the school organises open mornings in the first term prior to parents applying for reception places. A new parents meeting is held in June to introduce the school's expectations and routines, and to outline the induction process and Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and to visit the classroom.

Parents are given a reception document which outlines the curriculum and school routines, along with a pack to be completed and returned to school.

Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. Parents also fill in a document that helps us to get to know their child and family.

Reception to Year 1 Transition

Reception and year 1 teachers have worked together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Gastrells:

- children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year
- reception practitioners plan for some more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- guided reading sessions are introduced during the spring term in reception
- reception children meet year 1 teachers during whole school activities during the reception year, some reception children may stay in the same class with the same teacher as they progress to year 1 and others will move to a new class. All children in KS1 know the class teachers and classrooms well due to the fluidity across the key stage as a result of mixed year group classes.
- individual EYFS Profile folders and Tapestry journals are passed on to year 1 teachers
- an EYFS Profile end of year class summary sheet and assessment records are passed on to year 1 teachers
- reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- reception children visit their new year 1 class and teacher for some sessions in July
- during autumn and spring terms elements of the EYFS are maintained for continuity and valuing the importance of a practical, play based curriculum.
- In year 1 Children are given choice in the activities they access. There are plenty of hands-on tasks and practical activities, as well as a role play area and use of the outdoor learning area.
- Outdoor learning is planned for the outdoor classroom in year 1 and year 2

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the reception curriculum to parents during the new parents meeting in July, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- encouraging parents to complete the home/school admissions booklet and 'about me' section on their individual Tapestry accounts.
- sending home a half termly topic letter, informing parents of the learning that will be taking place at school.
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- inviting parents to help in our school and to accompany children on school visits and fun events.
- encouraging parents to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary.
- discussing individual targets with parents at parents' evening in November and March (informed by the EYFS Profile)
- providing an annual written report to parents in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales
- holding a variety of open days throughout the year when children's work is on show for them to show their parents their work/classroom – D and T Expo, Take One Artist Open Day
- Inviting parents to send in Wow! Vouchers for the children. These Wow! Vouchers are for something the parents feel have been a success for the children at home and this helps to inform the EYFS Profile
- Enabling parents to view their child's learning journey and observations at all times through their Tapestry account
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their child's EYFS profile by sharing home achievements with school through Tapestry, using a combination of photographs, videos and text

We will maintain a close link with care, management and progression of **Children in Care**, and maintain a close liaison with those involved in the child's welfare.

Equal Opportunities

At Gastrells we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability,

equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

For further information see Equal Opportunities Policy/Gender Equality Policy/Disability Equality Policy and Racial Equality Policy.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio.

Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Reception teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term.

The school's SEN co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy.

This policy cross references with the EFYS statutory framework:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf