

St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full 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. When parents choose to use early years services, they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance."



The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. At St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School children join us through a phased entry approach, enabling a smooth transition for all children into our Reception Class.

Our Christian Values

Christian values underpin our daily life at St Aldhelm's VA Church School. Children are given regular opportunities to explore these values and how they relate to their own lives throughout their school life at St Aldhelm's VA Church School.



The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School 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 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 St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School 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 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.

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. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

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."

At St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2007. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School 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 teacher offers to visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;

- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their new friends, teachers and teaching assistants before starting school during our SPRITE sessions and family teddy bears picnic, during the summer term;
- 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 Tapestry, their child's online Learning Journal, where observations of their child's learning and assessment are frequently updated by both teachers and teaching assistants;
- inviting all parents to a phonics and reading meeting during the Autumn term to find out how we teach phonics and reading at St Aldhelm's VA Church School and how parents can support their child at home;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal parent consultation meeting for parents each 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;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Collaboration through our class projects, Celebration assemblies, Christmas craft day, Nativity, Sports Day and our Celebrate and Share afternoon at the end of the year;
- encouraging parents to add to their child's online Tapestry journal, photographs and comments relating to their child's achievements.

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 teachers both act as 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistants. We have good links with local nurseries and preschools. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children.

Enabling Environments

At St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School 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.



Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term and Medium Term plan, which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly learning, 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 under notes from previous week's planning. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded on Tapestry, the children's individual online journal. They also contain observations and comments provided by parents. At St Aldhelm's VA Church School, we use SPTO to track the progress of each child in all areas of the EYFS curriculum. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow 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 learning environment changes with each theme and very much guided by the interests of the children. The EYFS class has its own undercover area and enclosed outdoor area.



Outdoor learning is a huge part of our provision at St. Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School. It gives children first-hand contact with weather, seasons and the natural world. Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development. We make use of all areas of our school grounds and wider community wherever possible, such as the Glebeland and Doultling trail, to further enhance our outdoor provision. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children take part in a 'forest school' activity once a week, alongside other daily outdoor learning opportunities, offering children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.

Learning and Development

The structure of the EYFS Curriculum comprises of 3 Prime Areas of Learning and 4 Specific Areas of Learning. It is recognised that children need to be secure in the Prime Areas, for learning in other areas to be accelerated.

The three Prime Areas of Learning:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

The four Specific areas of learning:

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 and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

At St Aldhelm's VA Church Primary School 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

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 1&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 carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- 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 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;

Play

“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.”

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. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“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 to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.



Creativity and Critical Thinking

“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 opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the Governing Body, raising any issues that require discussion.

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

