



Vernham Dean Gillums C of E Primary School Early Years Policy



Vision

At Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Primary School we are committed to creating an environment where children are able to SOAR- Success for all, take ownership of their learning, Aspire and achieve to their full potential and have opportunities to develop resilience and risk take in a safe and happy environment which develops their independence and a love for learning. Children are encouraged to have an enquiring mind and think deeper about the world in which they live.

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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 and 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 and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships. We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and real life experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development. The Early Years classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and be quiet. The classroom is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the Early Years on which children build the rest of their lives. At Vernham Dean School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure Early Years 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.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the Early Years stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the teachers work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their care.



Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes. 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. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.



At Vernham Dean School, we aim to:

Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.

Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm Early Years for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and their journey beyond.

Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.

Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.

Work in partnership with parents and guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability.

Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.



Additionally there are four specific areas of learning:

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



Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning underpin achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning. They describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner and are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics represent processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'



Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things



Observation, Assessment and Planning

At Vernham Dean School planning is divided into long term, medium term and short term. Long term plans state the topics to be covered for each year. Medium term plans illustrate the objectives being taught each term with an overview. Short term or weekly plans, show specific activities planned to achieve the objectives. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity during the week, although they may not experience them each day. A mixture of directed and free choice activities are planned and children's choices are carefully monitored to ensure a balanced programme. The children begin Early Years by having free choice of activities for most of the sessions. This free programme is gradually directed by staff as children get older and more mature, so that as they approach transition to Key Stage One, they are prepared for the Key Stage One framework.

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 already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are 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 needs. All staff who work in the Early Years Stage are involved in this process.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

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 long, short and recorded observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations maybe anecdotal or recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the Head Teacher. The parents and guardians are given the opportunity to meet with the Early Years Stage Team each term and, at the end of the third term, we provide a written summary in relation to the children's early learning goals to parents and guardians.

Learning Through Play

At Vernham Dean School, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

The Learning Environment

The Early Years classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Stage has an enclosed outdoor area and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

The Outdoor environment

Learning outside the classroom supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement, and promoting a sense of well-being. It gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and the seasons.

Outdoor play also supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity, as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness. And, of course, the outdoor environment offers more space than indoors and therefore is particularly important to those children who learn best through active movement. Which is why at Vernham Dean families are asked to provide their children with appropriate all-purpose clothing (Wellington boots /rainproof macs with hoods) so we can learn outside as much as possible!



The Induction Process

We call this FERNs it is where Reception parents are invited to a workshop in the summer term to provide them with essential information for the next academic year.

During the Summer Term prior to starting school the following September the following visits are conducted:

- Play and Stay sessions – In order for the children to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the Early Years environment

At the beginning of the academic year:

- Your Child's Class Teacher and Learning Support Assistant will visit you and your child in their home environment for a "home Visit"

When children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- Children will start a phased start to school so that they have a gentle and supportive induction into Willow Class, where they can spend time getting to know their class Teacher/s and Learning Support assistant
- When settling your child into Vernham Dean you will be invited to work closely with your child's Teacher/s and Learning Support Assistant to ensure your child feels safe and secure
- The needs of individuals will be taken into consideration prior to starting school & within this period and will be discussed with the Class Teacher & Head Teacher
- The staff in Early Years are happy to offer advice and support during this period

Organisation of classes

At Vernham Dean we have 1 class, having a maximum of 15 children.

The school day begins at 9.00am and ends at 3.30pm. All children must be accompanied to and from school by a known adult.

The Reception Class has a Class Teacher/s and a Learning Support Assistant



Home and School Links –Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the school and parents and carers to work closely in Early Years. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will outline the school's expectations in our Home School Agreement.
- A Home School Communication book will be given so that messages can be passed between home & school and vice versa
- Parent consultations will be held early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment
- We welcome "Home Observations" where parents or guardians can record outstanding achievements and these can be added to our Early Years platform – Tapestry (A way in which we can share information on what your child has been doing their school day/life at Vernham Dean)
- We will publish a Topic overview detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the half-term on our school website
- We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if Early Years staff

have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.

- We will conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home
- We will provide further parent/carer consultations/ to inform parents and carers formally of a child's overall progress.
- Parents and guardians are invited to 'Outcomes' sessions where your child will demonstrate some of the things they have learnt over the topic as well as give you the opportunity to see their classroom and some of the work they have produced

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The school's SENDCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

Safeguarding

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school and online for parents to read if they wish.

Positive Behaviour Management

In Willow class we follow the same Positive Behaviour Management policy and systems as the rest of the school. Please refer to Behaviour Management Policy for more information.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Headteacher will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system.

Date Written: October 2020

Date Reviewed by Governing Body: Nov 2020

To be Reviewed: October 2023