



# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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## Introduction

“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.”

(‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’ March 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) covers the development of children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. The overarching aim of the EYFS is 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 foundational knowledge and skills that they need to access our whole school curriculum from Year One. We also introduce the key characteristics of learning which will support children in becoming successful learners both whilst at our school and in the world beyond.

We follow the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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 and at different rates.**

## A Unique Child

At Falmouth Primary Academy, **well-being** is at the heart of all teaching and learning. Our school ethos places the highest importance on recognising the development of the whole child and our strong pastoral care underpins this belief supporting our children to **flourish**. We recognise **every child** as an individual, competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with their families over the Summer term before they join us when we complete home visits.

We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop in order to become **effective learners**. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem.

During their first year at school, the children are introduced to **good learning behaviours**. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of the growth mindset. They are taught that they can ‘grow their brains’ so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

In our school we believe that all our children matter and help all our children to achieve their best. This includes 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 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. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning opportunities that build upon and extend children’s knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.

We also aim to:

- use a wide range of **teaching strategies** based on children’s learning needs;
- provide a wide range of **opportunities** to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- provide a **safe and supportive** learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;

- use resources which reflect diversity and are **free from discrimination and stereotyping**;
- plan **challenging activities** for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitor **children's progress** and take action to provide support.

**It is important to us that all children 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 wellbeing of all children. (See our *Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy*)

## Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Needs

The Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. Children are encouraged to **develop a positive attitude** towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique in their own right and act upon it. Ramps and a disabled toilet are available within the school to cater for children with physical disabilities. Our curriculum respects a child's **ethnic faith and cultural heritage**, and the **special needs** of each child, by ensuring that these areas are covered within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that we identify and help those children in our care with additional educational needs including gifted children. We liaise with the school's SENDCO to identify next steps in learning in partnership with the parents.

(See *SEND Policy* and *Equal Opportunities 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 Falmouth Primary Academy we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024. 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;
- comply with the Trusts policies on use of images and storing them securely.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

## Positive Relationships

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

## Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We do this by:

- gathering information from parents about their child as their child starts our school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- carrying out home visits to begin to lay the foundation to build a secure two-way partnership between home and school;
- encouraging parents to attend parents evenings in the first two terms to discuss their child's progress;
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- sharing our approach to the teaching of phonics and reading;
- inviting parents to curriculum workshops where key information is explained;
- sharing our curriculum aims each term and providing some suggestions for parents to engage with at home;

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We encourage parents to talk to the child's teacher, if there are any concerns.

We use **Class DoJo** to share learning with you and provide a helpful communication tool between home and school.

## Enabling Environments

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

At Falmouth Primary Academy we place the individual child at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice.

We achieve this through:

- observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child-initiated activities and planned activities, and learning about what the child does at home;
- observing what children can do, and identifying their stage on their developmental pathway;
- considering ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development;
- considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in our care. This information is then effectively used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

The EYFS requires us to undertake summative assessments in which staff review children's progress and share a summary with parents at the end of the foundation stage through the EYFS Profile.

Within the first six weeks of being in school, alongside our on-going school-based assessments, we complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a statutory assessment which uses activities to make assessments of pupils' starting points in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

Pupils will use practical resources to complete these tasks and teachers will record the results. The assessments will support our school-based assessments to ensure that we provide a curriculum tailored to the needs of our pupils.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, we complete the EYFS profile for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels. It

furthermore prepares Year One teachers for individual children's readiness, needs and next steps. The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels or below expected levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals. In compliance with Early Years regulations parents may have access to developmental records about their child.

### **The Learning Environment**

The setting 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 to help the children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It presents the children with opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning.

### **Learning and Development**

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 Style**

- We use a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, live modelling make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- A carefully planned curriculum helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.
- We prioritise the development of early reading and early language as we understand this underpins the children's academic success across all areas of the curriculum.
- We teach using a mastery approach to Mathematics to ensure that the children secure the foundational knowledge they need to access the Year One curriculum.
- Children take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.
- Learning needs are supported with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space and equipment.
- We identify progress and future learning needs of children through observations.

### **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."*

Through play our children develop and explore a develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning 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.

### **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 satisfaction 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, the 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 unit to extend their learning.

### **Areas of Learning**

Children learn skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate their understanding through the seven areas of learning and development.

The **prime areas** are:

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

The **specific areas** are:

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

The prime areas are those most essential for a child’s healthy development and future learning. As they grow, these skills will support the child as they extend their development in the specific areas. 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.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We promote these values through our school mission statement, aims and values, our curriculum and enrichment activities.

### **Transition**

*From Pre-school / Feeder settings*

During the summer term prior to a child’s entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition.

- Parents are invited to an induction meeting to ensure they know about school procedures, meet some of our staff team and raise any concerns they may want to express.
- EYFS teachers will endeavour to visit children at home to begin to build positive relationships and find out about the interests of each child.
- Children requiring extra support will be offered additional visits either at home or at their pre-school setting.

### **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers 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 on-going observation, all relevant records held by the setting, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or 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 three key 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.

We pride ourselves on our transition and we continue to develop this to ensure that children leave Reception **ready for Year 1**. To support this, we use time within the summer term to familiarise our pupils with their new classroom and adults and begin to move towards an approach that closer reflects that of Key Stage 1. **Parents are supported** through transition through our parent information sessions and our Meet the Teacher sessions.

## Role of the EYFS Lead

EYFS is led and developed collaboratively by the team as a whole and overseen by our Early Years Lead. The role of the EYFS Lead is to provide professional leadership for the Early Years in order to facilitate the highest standards of teaching and learning and to secure effective use of resources.

This will involve:

- monitoring of pupil progress
- pupil conferencing
- analysing data
- taking the lead in policy development
- auditing, purchasing and organising resources
- supporting colleagues in their CPD
- keeping up to date with recent developments in the area
- checking that assessment of the EYFSP is carried out in line with the school's Assessment Policy and statutory requirements

## Monitoring and Review

The EYFS will be monitored in line with the School Improvement Plan by the Early Years Lead for EYFS in the first instance. The EYFS team regularly discuss EYFS practice, providing feedback to the school Leaders and the Headteacher, raising any issues that require discussion. A monitoring programme is in place and adapted for each half term.

For all monitoring of local policies, we adopt a rigorous and reflective approach. We take into account multiple perspectives on the effectiveness and success of the policy and procedures in question, including:

- the experience of the member(s) of staff designing and delivering the provision;
- feedback from our pupils
- observations and feedback from staff – both internal and external
- engagement in research, relevant literature, and continuing professional development (e.g. relevant training/workshops).

These perspectives inform our action plans for each aspect of our school provision – with an emphasis on meaningful reflection, improvement and enabling everyone at Falmouth to believe that their Futures Are Limitless.