



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 the 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 high-quality teaching and learning to ensure children’s **school readiness** and provides the foundational knowledge, skills and behaviours children need to successfully access the whole school curriculum from Year One.

At Falmouth Primary Academy, we place strong emphasis on the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**, which underpin our practice and support children in becoming confident, resilient and motivated lifelong learners.

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**, where their experiences respond to 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; this includes completing home visits and Stay and Play sessions.

We observe children to understand how they learn and to identify the characteristics they develop as effective learners. Through skilled questioning, praise and encouragement, we foster positive attitudes to learning and develop high levels of self-esteem.

During their first year at school, children are explicitly taught positive learning behaviours. They are encouraged to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous and cooperative, and to develop early reasoning skills. Children begin to understand the concept of a **growth mindset**, learning that intelligence can be developed through effort and practice. In this way, children are taught not only *what* to learn, but *how* to learn.

We believe that all children matter and are committed to ensuring that every child achieves their best. This includes boys and girls, children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), children who demonstrate strengths or advanced attainment in particular areas, and children from a wide range of social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

We provide equality of opportunity by taking account of each child’s life experiences when planning learning. Expectations are ambitious and realistic, and learning opportunities are planned to build upon and extend children’s existing knowledge, skills and interests.

We also aim to:

- use a wide **range of teaching strategies** based on children’s learning needs;
- provide **motivating and engaging** learning opportunities;

- offer a **safe, supportive and inclusive** learning environment in which every child is valued;
- use resources that **reflect diversity** and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- plan appropriately **challenging activities** for children whose understanding exceeds their language and communication skills;
- **monitor progress** carefully and respond through timely **intervention and support**.

Children's safety is paramount. We teach children about boundaries, rules and limits, helping them to understand why they exist. Children are supported to make choices and to take appropriate risks, learning how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We are committed to protecting the physical and emotional wellbeing of all children (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).

Safer Eating Requirements:

We promote safe eating practices at snack time. Children sit at tables to eat snack and an adult joins them at their table to ensure that they are eating within sight and hearing of an adult to reduce the potential of a choking incident. All EYFS staff are paediatric first aid trained.

Any allergies or intolerances are communicated with all staff. If a child has an allergy they will have a health care plan which will be shared with the whole team.

Intimate Care:

We have a separate Intimate Care policy which we follow for children who are still in nappies or pull ups when they join us. We ensure that the children's privacy needs have been considered. When a full change is required and for children needing high levels of support, we use the changing facilities in the ARB. For this, we always send two adults for changing children so that they are safeguarded. If a child is mostly independent when changing pull ups, we have a station that can be used near to the classroom and one adult has oversight of this. Any child who is being toilet trained will have their own intimate care plan which will be shared with parents and carers and regularly updated.

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 imagery.

The school takes responsibility for identifying and supporting children with additional needs. We work closely with the SENDCo and parents to identify needs early, agree next steps and ensure appropriate provision is in place.

(See *SEND Policy* and *Equal Opportunities Policy*)

Welfare

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure and when their individual needs are met through positive and trusting relationships. We comply fully with the welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2024).

We ensure that we:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- promote safer eating practices.
- promote good health, prevent infection and manage illness appropriately;
- support positive behaviour, appropriate to children's developmental stage;
- ensure the suitability of all adults working with children through safer recruitment.
- maintain safe, secure and suitable premises and equipment;
- provide enjoyable, challenging learning experiences tailored to individual needs;

- maintain accurate records, policies and procedures;
- comply with Trust policies on the use and secure storage of images.
- Follow our school attendance policy to ensure all children are safeguarded from harm.

Positive Relationships

Secure relationships are central to children's independence and learning. We build caring, respectful and professional relationships with children and their families, valuing open communication and mutual trust.

Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators, and we highly value their contribution. We support partnerships with parents by:

- **gathering information** about children before entry and throughout the year;
- holding **induction meetings** prior to starting school;
- **completing home visits** where appropriate;
- offering **parents' evenings** during the first two terms;
- providing a **written report** on each child's progress at the end of the year;
- sharing our EYFS curriculum, including our approach to phonics;
- offering **curriculum workshops** and information sessions;
- sharing termly curriculum aims and ideas for **supporting learning at home**.

Staff build strong relationships with children and families, listening carefully to concerns. Class Dojo is used to share learning experiences and support effective communication between home and school.

Enabling Environments

The learning environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending children's development. Careful observation informs the planning of engaging, challenging and meaningful learning experiences. Children are supported to become independent learners who can access and use resources confidently.

Indoor and outdoor environments are planned to support learning across all seven areas of the EYFS curriculum.

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.
- High quality interactions using the SHREC approach to develop children's communication and language skills which underpins all of the 7 areas of learning.

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, Learning and Play

Children learn best through play and active engagement. Through play, children explore, experiment, develop ideas and make sense of the world. Adults model learning behaviours, extend play sensitively and support children to reflect, persevere and try new approaches.

We use a range of teaching approaches, including:

- high-quality adult interactions based on the SHREC approach.
- direct teaching and modelling;
- adult-led and child-initiated learning;
- a carefully sequenced curriculum that supports progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

We prioritise early language, communication, reading and executive function skills, alongside a mastery approach to early mathematics.

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, 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 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.

As the year progresses, the nature of learning gradually becomes more formal, while remaining carefully adapted to meet the individual needs of each child. This ensures that all pupils continue to learn in ways that are appropriate and supportive, whilst also becoming familiar with more structured approaches to teaching

and learning. This development plays a key role in supporting children to build the skills, confidence and independence required for a successful transition into 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).

This reflective approach supports continuous improvement and enables everyone at Falmouth Primary Academy to **believe that their futures are limitless**.