



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

### **Document History**

Date	Description
May 2020	Draft to governors for discussion
May 2020	Approved by full governing body subject to amendments

# **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

Working together, we will discover, nurture and challenge the champion in all of us.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Ivybridge Primary School children may join Nursery in the September following their third birthday and join Reception the September following their fourth birthday. We also offer extended Nursery hours. For eligible working families we can offer an additional 15 hours, so a total of 30 hours.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Ivybridge Primary School, we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

## **Aims & Objectives**

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually.

At Ivybridge Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents/carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

## **The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:**

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;

- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents/carers.

**The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:**

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

**A Unique Child**

At Ivybridge 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 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 children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

**Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Ivybridge Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage, we have realistic but challenging expectations of all our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this 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 learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy).

- Working closely with parents/carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and enabling them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Ivybridge Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open afternoons and induction meetings.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their home setting or childcare provision prior to their starting school.
- Providing information about commencing Nursery and Reception at Ivybridge.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Providing an induction meeting for Nursery and Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding a parent/carer consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if early year's staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents/carers to discuss them.
- Contact through the early years emails and school newsletters.
- Sending home 'Proud Clouds' or 'Magical Me' slips designed to enable parents/carers to record achievements.
- Publishing a curriculum medium term plan detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the half-term as well as a class weekly blog.
- Inviting parents/carers to attend stay and play sessions and informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Sharing regularly the children's 'Learning Journey' with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- Offering three parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in reception.
- Asking parents/carers to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- Parents/carers are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day.

- Offering opportunities for parents/carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents/carers e.g. Dads and Lads reading event, topic outcome events.

### **Staffing**

We have one teacher and one early year's practitioner (EYP) in each class, all staff in the Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We also have SEN TA support for those children with an Education, Health, Care Plan (EHCP).

### **Enabling Environments**

At Ivybridge Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

### **Learning and Developing**

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

A balance of adult led and child initiated activities is required in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

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

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

From the beginning of their reception year pupils participate in a daily phonics session in line with school policy. In Nursery children are introduced to Phase 1 of the letters and sounds programme. This supports the development of speaking and listening and awareness of sounds.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

*'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'.*

*(Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)*

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, 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.

- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

*'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.'*

*(Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)*

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need 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.

- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

*'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.'*

*(Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)*

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

## **Planning**

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Planning objectives come from Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. Planning is based upon themes with phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. Our medium-term planning identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and for those working towards National Curriculum levels.

## **Observations**

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys.

## **Assessment**

During the first half term in Nursery the teacher makes their first assessment of the ability of each child through observation, watching children play and interact with peers and adults. In reception the teacher continues from nursery assessments (either in-house or information sent with new children). These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and

groups of children. Assessments are ongoing throughout the year in nursery and reception.

Data packs are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary for each child, which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be beginning, developing or embedded within the Development Matters age-bands

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities from both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. Teachers keep progress records and learning journals. These progress books hold examples of children's work and contain a wide range of evidence that we share with Early Years advisors at borough trialling events and with parents/carers at parental consultation meeting.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 early learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents/carers receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents/carers in early July each year.

### **The Learning Environment**

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet and creative.

Children have access to both inside and outside areas across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor classroom area, complete with a wooden role-play shed, a sand pit and water feature. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The



children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

### **Teaching & Learning Styles**

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers, parents/carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- 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 space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents/carers;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning in before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

### **Transition**

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Nursery and Reception parents/carers of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the summer term. They will meet the early year's team and other key staff and learn more about the early years' curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- To go through the school routines and expectations

- Explain about uniform, book bags, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals,
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to reception.
- Arrange home visit dates and times for those children new to our reception and for those nursery children who started mid-year and didn't receive a home visit.

Nursery staff home visit all children and these are arranged at the induction meeting, these informal meetings are a lovely opportunity for staff to visit children and families in their home. It helps to begin forming the relationship between parents/carers, practitioners and children and it starts the process of sharing information and building secure attachments. We happily work alongside Private, Voluntary and Independent Nurseries (PVI's) to ensure transition from one setting to another is as smooth as possible.

Throughout the year, children new to our school, are given the opportunity to come in, meet their new class teacher and other children in their class and have tour of the school and to ask any questions.

Arrangements are also made for the children's new class teacher and the SEN Support co-ordinator to visit children with SEN or with an EHCP in their current setting.

Nursery intake- once all home visits are completed mid-September children are admitted in small groups each day over a week. This process can be extended for those children who need a longer time to settle in.

Reception intake - When children start in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first week, children will attend for the morning session only, having lunch at school and then going home at 1pm.
- During the second week, and thereafter, children will attend for the full school day unless foundation stage staff and parents/carers or guardians agree that it is not in the best interest of an individual child.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children.

### **Safeguarding & 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.'* (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Ivybridge Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Keeping Safe**

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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Ivybridge's Safeguarding Policy).

### **Good Health**

In nursery and reception children are offered a healthy snack during the morning and afternoon sessions. This is a learning opportunity for the children, developing not only physical skills but providing opportunities for language development through social interactions with friends and staff. In nursery, children sit in small groups where they access fresh fruit/vegetables, milk and water, this moves onto a rolling snack bar in reception.

During these sessions we talk about healthy and unhealthy foods and the importance of oral hygiene. We teach children to be aware of what good oral health means. We help them, their parents/carers to understand the importance of cleaning their teeth with fluoride toothpaste and the importance of visiting the dentist on a regular basis. We explain how healthy eating, regular exercise and sleep are important factors in keeping our bodies fit and healthy.

### **Intimate Care**

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when

meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents/carers to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents/carers and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins early years at Ivybridge. See Ivybridge Primary School Intimate Care Policy.

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in Foundation Stage to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS co-ordinator will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Governing Body will also be part of this process. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner as necessary.