

Jesus said “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

Matthew 13:31-32

Tewin Cowper C of E Primary School



Believe Grow Succeed

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Version 3

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1. Intent

Rationale

In the Early Years at Tewin Cowper C of E Primary School we believe that every child is unique. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. We ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and nurturing environment where play and learning is combined. Through practical learning experiences, we strive to foster a love of learning within our children and encourage natural curiosity. At Tewin Cowper we are committed to giving our children the best possible start to their school life, equipping them with skills for both now and in the future.

Ambition

Our intent is:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- We have both quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- To establish a close working partnership between staff and parents/ carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Structure of the EYFS

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/carers 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. Entry into our primary school is typically at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five. The Department of Education states that when a child reaches the age of four between 1st September of that year and 1st July of the following year, that child must begin education in September of the following year. There will be some occasions whereby parents/carers, will decide to defer their child's starting date to the following September. The admissions process does not change if a child's starting date is deferred. Please refer to the admissions policy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a vitally important stage in education. It aims to prepare children socially, emotionally and academically for the National Curriculum and later schooling.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. The early years' education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- Builds on what our children already know and can do;
- Ensures inclusion so that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- Offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and content that matches the needs of young children;
- Activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- Provides a rich and stimulating environment.

The Foundation Class 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 unit is set up in learning areas, where children are

able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Stage Class has its own limited, enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities 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.

Learning Through Play

“Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play, which is guided by adults. “

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practice skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or enjoy anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.”

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

“Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.”

Children should be given the 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.

3. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- 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 that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. The planning within the EYFS is based around half termly topics. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

4. Assessment

At Tewin Cowper, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

5. Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played and their future role in educating their child. We do this through:

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Face to face parent consultations happen twice a year and parents/teachers will have an opportunity to discuss each child and look at their Learning Journey.

Parents/carers are also invited into school in the summer term before their child starts for a 'New parent evening' as well as coming to a 'Stay and play' session with their child.

'Magic moments' sheets are sent home throughout the year so parents/carers can share positive achievements from home/clubs etc.

Each week the teachers send home an 'Ask me what I've been learning this week...' to encourage communication and language and conversation about the learning experiences happening each week.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

6. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

If the appraiser is not satisfied with progress, the teacher will be notified in writing that the appraisal system will no longer apply and that their performance will be managed under the capability procedure and will be invited to a formal capability meeting. The capability procedures will be conducted in accordance with the schools' capability procedure.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

It is the responsibility of the Foundation Stage teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named School Governor responsible for the EYFS. The School Governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and subject coordinator carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

The EYFS Policy will be monitored and approved by the School Governors every three years or earlier if necessary.

Appendix 1 – List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy