Wolston St Margaret's C of E Primary School

LEARNING, BELIEVING AND ACHIEVING TOGETHER TO

'LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE'

MATTHEW 5;16

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Our Christian vision shapes all that we do: Learning, Believing, and Achieving together to "Let your Light Shine" (Matthew 5:16).

Guided by our Christian values of ***Honesty, Love, Courage and Community****, we encourage all to flourish. Like a lamp set high to light its surroundings, everyone — whether timid or outgoing — is called to share their light for all to see. Our vision welcomes children and adults of all faiths and none, inspiring them to live, grow, and learn together, showing the world their unique light.*

June 2025

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Rationale

At Wolston St Margaret's C of E Primary School, we recognise that the Early Years Foundation Stage is a unique, crucial phase of education that lays the foundation for lifelong learning. Our vision is rooted in the belief that early childhood is not simply preparation for the next stage of education, but a valuable stage in itself. We aim to nurture each child's development holistically—academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

We acknowledge that every child starts school with unique experiences, backgrounds, and learning styles. Our EYFS practitioners work in partnership with families to build on those experiences and ensure that all children thrive

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) at Wolston St Margaret's Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early Years Foundation Stage

At Wolston St Margaret's, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where every child is recognised and valued as an individual. Our aim is to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that sparks curiosity, fosters creativity, and cultivates a lifelong love of learning. Through high-quality interactions and responsive teaching, we support the development of children's language, confidence, and independence. We believe that strong partnerships with families and the wider community are essential in supporting each child's learning and development. Our inclusive approach ensures that the needs of all children are met, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

The Unique Child

At Wolston St Margaret's, we recognise that every child is a competent and capable learner from birth, with the potential to be resilient, confident, and self-assured. We value each child as an individual, acknowledging that they develop in unique ways and at different rates. By nurturing their sense of identity and self-worth, we create an environment in which children feel secure, respected, and encouraged to explore, learn, and grow.

Positive Relationships

We believe that positive relationships are the bedrock of successful learning at Wolston St Margaret's Primary School. In order for children to be independent learners they must form secure relationships with their peers and with adults. Through a strong emphasis on the personal development of each child and high expectations of behaviour, we aim to build supportive, respectful and honest professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling Environments

At Wolston St Margaret's Primary School, we believe that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The whole approach to establishing an environment of psychological safety and rich learning opportunities begins with the knowledge staff have of every child, their varying needs and stages of development, and the outcomes we know they are capable of achieving. Through observation and interaction, we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, varied, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. We also plan and consider the quality and scope of the learning environment. The classrooms and outdoor area are 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 in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently

Learning and Development

The Early Learning Goals are set out in the 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' document (DFE, 2021). Our curriculum has been developed using and incorporating Development Matters (DFE 2021) and Birth to 5 Matters (EYC 2021) educational programmes. We recognise that the importance of children developing and learning at different rates, and strive to meet the needs of all children in early years provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

There are seven areas of learning and development in EYFS, which are as follows:

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)

Specific Areas:

- Mathematics (M)
- Literacy (L)
- Understanding of the World (UW)
- Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

At Wolston St Margaret's Primary School, we believe that once the children are secure in the prime areas of learning they will be prepared to access the specific areas. However, all areas are important to ensure the development of the whole child. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful learning, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities and an emphasis on play and choice.

Communication and Language covers the strands of:

- ➢ Listening, Attention and Understanding
- ➢ Speaking

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. In Communication and Language, opportunities will be given for children to experience a language-rich environment and to engage in speaking and listening activities where they can communicate thoughts, feelings and ideas to adults and to each other. They will develop the confidence and skills to express themselves, building vocabulary and oracy through a range of active learning, self-chosen tasks and specifically planned learning that develops speaking and listening skills. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, children will be encouraged to share their ideas with support and modelling from adults.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development covers the strands of:

- ➢ Self-Regulation
- ➢ Managing Self
- ➢ Building Relationships

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. In developing personal social and emotional development, the children will be given the opportunity to work in different ways, working with the whole class, with learning partners, small groups or by themselves to develop independence and to promote emotional, moral, spiritual and social development. They are encouraged to share, take responsibility, play and co-operate and build positive relationships with others. Children will be supported to manage emotions and recognise and understand their own feelings and those around them. They will also be taught to recognise their own learning dispositions and to use and

interpret the language of learning so they are able to develop resilience and strategies to support their future development.

Physical Development covers the strands of:

- ➢ Gross Motor Skills
- ➢ Fine Motor Skills

In Physical Development, the children will experience opportunities to develop confidence and control in the way they move and the way they handle tools and equipment. We aim to support children to develop core strength, stability, balance and spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. We provide lots of opportunities for children to be active indoors and in our outside spaces. We encourage the children to dress and undress themselves independently and manage their own personal hygiene, to exercise, keep fit and stay safe. They will enjoy a range of P.E. sessions, and will learn to develop finer motor skills through construction work, and using tools such as scissors and tweezers. Children will be supported to develop skills, confidence and strength for writing, taking part in daily Dough Disco, Squiggle While You Wiggle and Drawing Club.

Literacy covers the strands of:

- ➢ Reading
- ➢ Writing

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. In Literacy we work on language comprehension and word reading in a range of ways. Rhymes, stories, poetry and non-fiction will be shared and enjoyed so that children learn to love books and see the value of reading. Through shared reading times, children will have lots of opportunities to talk about ask and answer questions about stories and non-fiction texts and develop a rich vocabulary in a range of topics. Children will plan and develop the Reading Area each term linked to their enhanced learning theme. They will be given opportunities to see adults modelling writing and to write themselves for a range of purposes. Children will be supported and encouraged to articulate and structure their ideas before writing. Letter sounds will be linked to letter shapes and writing introduced early to assist fluency. Children will have daily phonics sessions, and will begin to read and write high frequency words accurately. Through play and themed learning, there will be opportunities to write at length and for pleasure.

Mathematics covers the strands of:

- ➢ Number
- ➢ Numerical Patterns

In Mathematics we aim for all children to have a deep understanding of number, numerical patterns and shape, space and measure. We believe that is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics. Children are given lots of opportunities to develop their number recognition, develop confidence in counting skills and recognise patterns, relationships and connections, using active games and manipulatives, through discrete whole class teaching sessions, adult led small group activities and continuous play provision. Children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary and using a mastery approach, children are encouraged to 'have a go' and reflect.

Understanding the World covers the strands of:

- ➢ Past and Present
- ➢ People, Culture and Communities
- ➢ The Natural World

In Understanding the World, children will be given the opportunity to observe, investigate and make sense of their physical world; their local community; and important members of our community that help us. Children will outside spaces to explore, investigate and recognise seasonal and ecological changes. They will also explore environments and learn about cultures, religions and countries further afield. Children will have the opportunity to use iPads, computers and a range of IT equipment to have a better understanding of our technological world.

Expressive Arts and Design covers the strands of:

- ➢ Creating with Materials
- ➢ Being Imaginative and Expressive

We aim to provide opportunities and experiences for children to develop artistic and cultural awareness, imagination and creativity. The children will be provided with a rich environment where creativity and self-expression are really valued. They will have the opportunity to explore a wide variety of media and materials, linked to learning themes, and respond to a variety of activities using their senses. They will be encouraged to communicate their thoughts, feelings and ideas through art, music, movement, dance, role-play and imaginative play.

Nurturing Spiritual Growth and Understanding of Church in the EYFS

As a church of England school, we believe that every child is a precious gift from God, uniquely made and deeply loved. In our Early Years classrooms, we gently nurture each child's spiritual development, helping them to explore and understand the Christian faith and the life of the Church in ways that are meaningful and age-appropriate.

Our approach is rooted in creating a warm, welcoming environment where children can experience the love of God through stories, play, and relationships. We share Bible stories, celebrate Christian festivals, and engage in simple prayers and songs that speak to young hearts. Through these experiences, children begin to sense the rhythms of the Church year and the joy of belonging to a faith community.

We also value the importance of awe and wonder in a child's spiritual journey. Whether it's marveling at the beauty of creation, expressing thoughts and feelings through creative activities, or asking big questions about the world, we encourage children to explore and reflect in a safe and supportive space.

Recognising that spirituality encompasses more than religious knowledge, we focus on fostering qualities such as kindness, compassion, and respect for others. By building strong, caring relationships and encouraging empathy, we help children develop a sense of connection to themselves, to others, and to something greater.

Partnership with families is central to our approach. We honor and celebrate the diverse backgrounds and experiences that each child brings, working together with parents and carers to support their child's spiritual growth.

In all we do, our aim is to lay a gentle foundation for faith, inviting children to discover the love of God and the joy of being part of the Church family.

ORGANISATION

The children are taught in single form Nursery and Reception classes by qualified teachers, early years professionals and a team of teaching assistants. The children are organised in different ways for teaching, ranging from whole class direct teaching to individual 1:1 sessions and opportunities for collaborative or self-directed activities. Support staff are deployed to target individual learning needs so children can move on at an appropriate pace to suit their development.

The classrooms are arranged to provide the children with easy access to materials and resources to develop their skills and independence, and promote choice and self-motivation. There are daily sessions focused on phonics, maths and literacy. We also plan a rich variety of opportunities for children to learn outdoors in all areas of the curriculum.

OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

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, and children can shape the learning through

knowledge harvests and reflections. 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 practitioners who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in making observations of the children's new learning.

The planning within EYFS takes account of the children's interests and development needs and responds to their progress and starting points. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning. However, plans may be adapted in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. 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 recorded observations (written or photographed) as well as the teacher's professional judgement.
Observations are used to inform the end of Foundation Stage assessment against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of effective learning (DfE,2021). Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written report against the Early Learning Goals to parents. Parents are given the opportunity to meet the Foundation Stage team at various points throughout the year for shared learning events and there are also opportunities for parents to meet their child's class teachers on more formal occasions.

ASSESSMENT

Within the first half term on entering the class, a baseline assessment is undertaken with the child. This establishes a starting point to inform our planning and to track progress. The child's Transfer Profile, transition meeting information from playgroup, nursery and discussions with parents before children start will also be used as a starting point for assessment. All children will be assessed against EY Curriculum statements throughout their Nursery and Reception years and then against the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) at the end of the Reception year. Informal discussions about children's progress are welcomed and formal meetings are also held throughout the year.

STARTING SCHOOL

We ensure smooth and positive transitions into and through the Early Years by working closely with nurseries, childminders, and families prior to entry. Children are supported through stay-and-play sessions and a phased start to help them feel confident and secure in their new environment. A key person approach is used to build trusting relationships quickly, ensuring each child feels safe, known, and supported.
Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the summer term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about our EYFS. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Explain the information pack.
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals.
- Explain about holidays and absences.
- Purchase uniform and book bag if requested.
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction into Early Years.

New class sessions - The children are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. This means that before they join their new class the Foundation Stage environment is already a familiar place to them.

September & January Intake - When children join the school in September or January a staggered entry approach will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings.

As children approach the transition to Year 1, we gradually introduce them to more structured learning experiences while maintaining the core principles of the EYFS pedagogy, allowing for continuity in both emotional security and educational development

SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE

Safeguarding is an integral part of our daily duties, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We aim at all times 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.
- 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 the children on boundaries, rules and limits and we adhere to three school rule – **Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe**. 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 our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy)

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times. We are a nut aware school (having children with severe nut allergies on site) so we never offer nuts or nut based products and we request that all parents support us with this.

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. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene. 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 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 and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Wolston St Margaret's.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We aim to include all children and meet their individual needs. No child will be excluded or disadvantaged because of race, culture, religion, language, family background, special needs, disability, gender or ability.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The Head teacher, the Chair of Governors, SLT and Quality and Standards Committee are responsible to monitoring and evaluating the effect of this policy. It should be reviewed annually.