

Greenmount Primary School

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

March 2023

1 Document Information

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3 **Rationale**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to all children from birth to five years – to the end of the Reception year. At Greenmount Primary School, all pupils join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child’s fifth birthday). They are admitted according to the Isle of Wight’s Admissions Policy. Although the Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children for later schooling, we recognise it as a unique phase, important in its own right. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of children by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children join us from a range of pre-school settings all of which follow the same framework (EYFS). The principles which guide this are:

A Unique Child – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a Key Person.

Enabling Environments – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning.

Learning and Development – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

(Department for Education (2021) *Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five*. London, DfE).

4 **Aims**

The curriculum of the EYFS underpins all future learning by supporting, promoting and developing children’s –

Prime Areas:

- **Communication and language** involves giving the children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, frequently reading to the children and engaging them actively in stories and providing extensive opportunities to use and embed new words, to develop confidence and speaking skills.
- **Physical development** supports children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision help with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** supports children to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary.

They learn to look after their bodies (including healthy eating and managing personal needs) and they learn to develop friendships, cooperate and resolve conflicts; these attributes provide a platform for children to achieve in school and later life.

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy** encourages language comprehension through a love of books, rhymes, poems and songs. Children later develop skilled word reading, both the working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription and composition.
- **Mathematics** includes opportunities to develop and improve skills in counting, understanding number and simple calculations. Focusing on developing a deep understanding of numbers to 10, providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.
- **Understanding the world** guides children to make sense of their physical world and community. A range of personal experiences and listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster the understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.
- **Expressive arts and design** develops children's artistic and cultural awareness to support their imagination and creativity; encouraging children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials.

5 Learning and Teaching Style

The effective features of learning and teaching apply in the EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The more general features of good practice in Greenmount School that relate to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between parents and teachers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn and how this affects their teaching.
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- The carefully planned, broad and balanced curriculum that helps children achieve the Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the EYFS.
- 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 indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations which are regularly shared with parents.
- The good relationships and regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do.
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the EYFS.

The three key characteristics of effective teaching and learning in Early Years are:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

6 Play

We believe that play is the most powerful way in which young children learn. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences that help them make sense of the world:

- They practice and build upon ideas and 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.
- They express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- We do not make a distinction between 'work' and 'play'.

7 Inclusion

At Greenmount Primary School, we value all our children. 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. The children's interests influence directly on planning for topics and activities. The planning is therefore flexible to allow adaptation to ensure the children's passions and current knowledge is built upon effectively.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, to support the children to meet the expected Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by responding to and planning for the needs of all pupils which may include – boys and girls, children with Special Educational Needs, children who are More Able, children with disabilities and children from differing social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We aim to meet the needs of our children by:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests.
- Using a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and help them learn effectively.
- Ensuring the setting fosters the importance of play, as play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitoring children's progress through observations, assessment and taking action to provide support as necessary, including appropriate external support if required.
- Discussing with a child's parent and/or carer and agree how to support the child if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern.

8 SEN (Special Educational Needs)

Some pupils will progress at rates outside the expectations and every child develops at their own pace. We aim to identify any Special Educational Needs as early as possible and provide appropriate support and challenge. Initially, we create a pupil passport for children to identify any support required and include both pupil voice and parental contributions. Some pupils will have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and may receive external support. Pupils may be placed on a register of pupils with Special Educational Needs. Parents/carers would be invited to be involved in discussions and in developing these plans.

9 Safeguarding

Safeguarding determines the actions that we take to keep children safe and protect them from harm in all aspects of their school life. As a school we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all our pupils. In Early Years, we follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures Guidance (October 2022).

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play. In order to fulfil this responsibility effectively, all practitioners should make sure their approach is child-centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child. (Department of Education (2022) *Keeping Children Safe in Education. Statutory guidance for schools and colleges*. London, DfE).

10 The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The EYFS is guided primarily by the Department for Education (DfE) by the Conservative Government. This National guidance identifies the Early Learning Goals that children in the EYFS aim to achieve across seven areas of learning and provides a development pathway for each area.

The areas of learning are:

Communication and language (CL)

- Listening, attention and understanding
- Speaking

Physical development (PD)

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

Personal, social and emotional development (PSED)

- Self-regulation
- Managing self
- Building relationships

Literacy (L)

- Comprehension
- Word reading
- Writing

Mathematics (M)

- Number
- Numerical pattern

Understanding the world (UW)

- Past and present
- People, culture and communities
- The natural world

Expressive arts and design (EAD)

- Creating with materials
- Being imaginative and expressive

All areas of learning are developed across a wide range of provision areas in our classrooms and outdoors, including structured play areas across each area. Throughout the week,

children experience a balance of opportunities to learn through their own initiated play and through adult-led or group activities.

11 Collective Worship

In EYFS, collective worship may take the form of a short 'think about' Circle Time. In addition, children join in whole school assemblies when staff consider they would benefit from these experiences. These daily acts of worship are broadly Christian in nature and children are given opportunities to participate in significant celebrations throughout the school year.

12 Assessments

The Reception Baseline Assessment became statutory in 2020 and is completed in the first 6 weeks of a child joining Reception. It provides an on-entry measurement of pupil attainment to support the measurement of progress through their learning journey at primary school. The assessment consists of mathematical tasks and literacy, communication and language (LCL) tasks and assesses these early skills.

When a child enters Reception, the teachers use information from parents/carers, from the pre-school the child has attended and from informal discussions that have taken place during the child's induction, to aid planning for the term and to provide a range of learning opportunities appropriate to the child. From then on, the class teacher and supporting adults will make observations of children while they are engaged in learning. We use this information to modify the teaching programme for individuals and groups of children. We share this information from ongoing assessments with parents and children through Tapestry observations and at termly parents' evenings (which coincide with the rest of the school's parents' evenings). As the children settle in to school life, teachers will complete the Baseline assessment.

We make ongoing assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in EYFS takes the form of observations, the majority of which are taken from child-initiated activities. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share. Towards the end of EYFS some more formal assessments, such as phonic screening, may take place if the teacher feels appropriate.

The staff can record documentation, which supports observational assessments. This may include photographs, examples of independent writing, drawings, paintings or annotated work. Every child has an online Tapestry account, which is accessible to their parents/carers once they have given their permission. All children have a workbook, known as a busy book, which is a collection of their independent writing, number work, drawings and pictures, as well as adult-led learning. Parents have access to their child's busy book and books are shared during parents' evening.

There is a statutory requirement to complete the Early Years Profile for each child to indicate if they have achieved the Early Learning Goals (expected levels of development) during the summer term, towards the end of the EYFS. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their

own expert professional judgement. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. A report is generated for parents sharing this data and is then shared with the staff in Year 1 to support each child's transition from the EYFS as they continue their learning journey.

13 Transition

Transition meetings occur throughout the school year between EYFS, Year 1 and SLT staff, to discuss how effective the transition period was in the previous year and discuss possible changes that may make it more effective in the future. This also provides an opportunity to discuss how well children settle into Year 1 and how to continue to make the transition as seamless as possible.

A significant number of Reception children are based at the on-site pre-school. The EYFS teachers work closely with the Pre-school Manager to plan effective transitions from pre-school to school. The EYFS Lead meets regularly with the Pre-school Manager in order to maintain pre-school and school links throughout the year. The transition period can be altered depending on the cohort joining the school. Transitions can also be extended for individual children or groups to ensure the smoothest transition possible. Transition includes: visits to school throughout the summer term, opportunities to share significant events (including sports day) and pre-school based story time - led by the teachers.

Greenmount Primary School has children joining from a range of settings. To ensure all children have a seamless transition, teachers visit the children in their settings and/or have conversations with the key person from their preschool. During the summer term, children will participate in transition visits to the Reception classes, visiting the school and meeting the staff. All children and parents are invited to have a one-to-one meeting with a member of the EYFS team to gain a holistic view of each child prior to starting school.

14 Role of Parents

We recognise and value the important and vital role that parents have as their child's educators and the contribution parents make towards their child's ongoing learning.

We:

- Work with parents/carers to build a picture of the child's abilities, interests and development needs prior to the child entering the Reception classes, by meeting with parents at school for an informal discussion and using information through Tapestry.
- Ensure that parents/carers have opportunities to become familiar with the principles of the EYFS and curriculum framework and with how it is delivered at Greenmount Primary School, by inviting parents to a series of information sessions during the summer term before the child starts school and then through sessions throughout the year. In addition, a follow-up presentation to parents is available to talk more in-depth about the curriculum once the children have settled in. The focus during this presentation is based on how to support reading and learning at home and explains how Tapestry is used to record the children's progression.

- Welcome contributions from parents/carers and provide opportunities for parents to contribute from their own skills, knowledge and interests through Tapestry. This helps staff to develop a holistic view of the child's current stage of learning.
- Involve parents/carers in shared record keeping about their own child and inform them of their child's progress on a regular basis through Tapestry.
- Make sure that parents are kept well-informed through the school newsletters (emailed to parents through the school app and on the school's website) and through individual notes in the child's reading diary.
- Provide guidance, advice and resources to support home learning.
- Teachers consult with parents, providing them with key information and documentation surrounding EYFS.
- Make known to parents the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions.

15 Resources and Playtimes

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the local community and wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of activities and resources on offer and encourage independence.

Our Reception classes are housed in large, spacious classrooms with purpose built toilets, leading directly from both classrooms. Doors from both classrooms lead straight outside to the learning environment that has a trim trail, stage, mud kitchen, playhouse, gravel pit, cosy reading shed and sand pit. The children are encouraged to use all areas during the day. The children's play is not interrupted with breaks as the children learn and discover through play. Children are encouraged to join adult-led activities; however, we promote self-selecting tasks, resources and areas of learning to build upon their independence and current interests.

The children play in their own outside area at lunchtime and are supported by midday supervisory assistants (and occasionally Year 6 children). During the summer term, children join the rest of the school for lunchtime activities on the field supervised by the MSAs to support the transition from Reception to Year 1.