

# **Tankersley C of E (A) Primary School**

## **Early Year Foundation Stage Policy 2016/17**



*A love of learning developed in a Christian environment.*

## **Introduction**

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. 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.”*

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

We believe that the early years are a vital time for children, because it is when attitudes to learning are shaped. It is also when attitudes and responses to others are established and when children are shaped socially. It is our responsibility therefore to broaden and extend a child's experiences in school to ensure that they gain both delight and pleasure in learning. We value the whole child as an individual and believe in developing self-esteem, independence, self-reliance, curiosity, creativity and the ability to make decisions for themselves. This includes valuing play and active learning.

## **Principles**

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

**A unique child.** 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 and develop a positive attitude to learning.

**Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Relationships in which children feel secure are a crucial aspect of their development.

**Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests and stages of development and learning in order to plan for an enabling environment.

**Learning and development.** We understand that children develop at different rates. We strive to ensure that the needs of all children are met and that all children receive an appropriate and challenging education regardless of needs. We believe that young children are motivated by the joy of exploring, creating and learning.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Tankersley St Peters we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying the secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the Foundation Stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation team work effectively together to support the learning and development of all children.

### **Areas of learning and development**

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS. These are split into the prime and specific areas. The prime areas are considered to be particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These Prime Areas are:

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

There are also 4 Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These seven areas of learning support the planning in the Foundation Stage and provide a framework for the learning environment. The curriculum for the early years identifies progress through the ages and stages towards early learning goals in each area. These goals are the established expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

All areas of the curriculum are equally important and are planned for to ensure that children receive a broad, balanced and challenging learning experience. We believe that the child should be at the heart of the planning and assessment process so that their experience, interests and learning styles can be explored and used to plan the next steps. All areas of learning depend on each other and are delivered through child initiated and adult led activities.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The teachers plan activities with these in mind.

They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

## **Teaching**

Learning in the Foundation Stage is done through whole class, adult directed and child initiated activities.

### **Child initiated learning**

Children will spend time learning through play. Adults will facilitate learning in the different areas to ensure that children are moving on with their learning.

### **Whole class**

At certain times throughout the day, the children will come together for some direct, carefully planned, adult led teaching and activities. This allows for teaching of specific skills as well as supporting the children to get into good habits of learning e.g. listening to the teacher, learning as part of a group, taking turns, sitting still etc. Whole class sessions often take the form of carpet sessions and these are timetabled slots throughout the day. In these slots we focus on the seven areas of learning.

### **Small groups**

In addition to whole class teaching, children will often work in groups led by an adult. This will increase towards the end of FS2 in order to prepare children for their transition to KS1.

### **Phonics**

In addition, the children in Foundation Stage Two will take part in daily phonics sessions. We follow the Ruth Muskin, Read Write Inc phonics scheme which ensures that children are taught in small groups according to their needs. In addition, the older children in FS1 are introduced to the sounds using the scheme. Children are assessed every six weeks and progress is monitored by

the RWI lead. Children who are falling behind in phonics are given additional support to ensure that they catch up.

### **The Indoor Classroom Environment**

We believe that the learning environment is especially important and aim to provide an attractive, well organised and carefully structured setting that supports both the child and the curriculum. It will be rich and stimulating allowing all children to feel proud of their achievements. It will also be practical and purposeful, enabling young children to work independently, matching activities to learning styles and interests. It will be clean, tidy and inviting. In addition, the learning environment will also include outdoors and the provision for outside play should complement and add to the provision in the classroom.

### **The Outdoor Classroom Environment**

Our outdoor space also provides for a range of learning opportunities, across the seven areas of learning. Children can explore and problem solve, following their own interests and ideas. There are different areas such as the mud kitchen, environmental/enquiry area, climbing frame, water wall, story and mark making areas plus many more. These provide opportunities for children to develop sustained shared thinking and other independent learning characteristics and skills across the early years curriculum.

### **Parents as partners**

At Tankersley we believe that parents and practitioners should work together to enhance children's learning and achievements.

In the EYFS we ensure a strong relationship between parents and staff through:

- Offering a home visit to support the transition into school. When children enter Foundation Stage One they will be visited at home by one of the team in FS1. If children join at the beginning of the reception year they will be offered a home visit by the Reception teacher in the summer term before they are due to begin school in the autumn term.
- Formal parent's evenings are twice a year.
- An 'open door' policy whereby parents are actively encouraged to share ideas / information or any concerns, when they drop children off in the morning or after the school day has finished.
- A weekly newsletter outlining what is going to happen in school that week and what the children will be learning.
- A regularly updated class blog.
- Communicating achievements to parents through the use of certificates, positive postcards and positive comments.

- Communicating concerns about behaviour. By following the school behaviour policy parents will be informed if their child is mis-behaving at school.
- Encouraging parents to share achievements at home through the use of 'Star / Wow Moment' slips.

### **Admission**

Children are admitted to F1 from the age of three, and are offered five sessions per week. These sessions can be taken as all morning or afternoon sessions, or can be combined together to make full days. When available, additional sessions may be purchased to add on to the five free session entitlement.

All children have a right to full time education from September in the academic year in which they are five. Therefore those who have their fifth birthday before the end of August are offered a full time place at the beginning of the previous Autumn Term (September) in the F2 class.

### **Planning**

The EYFS, Developmental Matters provides the basis for planning. Topics are chosen to reflect children's interests and to provide a vehicle for coverage of the curriculum.

Starting with the seven areas of learning from the Foundation Stage document the planning formats include-

- Long term planning. This is a one/two year cycle of possible themes or topics. These may change according to the children's needs and/or interests.
- Medium term planning. This includes half termly planning which is organised under the seven areas and details how the theme will be implemented.
- Short term planning. These include weekly plans which show adult input, regular activities, daily focus and learning intentions and allow for child initiated activities. In FS2 more detailed planning for maths and literacy will be done on a weekly basis. As part of our short term planning, children's interests at home and school are noted and help to inform the following week's planning.

### **Assessment in EYFS**

Regular assessments of children's learning are made, and these are used to inform planning. These take the form of:

- Informal observations that are made by the practitioners and assessments across the seven areas of learning made regularly.
- Focussed assessments are planned for and conducted to assess specific areas of learning.
- Informal and more formal assessments of children's progress in reading, writing and numeracy are made in the F2 years

In addition:

- All children are assessed on entry to F1 and F2, and on leaving the Foundation Stage. See overleaf for more information about baseline assessments in FS2.
- The monitoring of each child will take place through regular observations, discussions, photographs, record keeping and planned assessments. These will be compiled into a 'Learning Journey' using the EMAG writer, along with children's recorded learning. This is regularly reflected upon by the children themselves and is available for parents to look at. It is also shared during Parent's Evening. The 'Learning Journey' tracks each child's holistic development, interests and achievements.
- The assessments against the curriculum statements are brought together in the Profile document at the end of FS2. Children are assessed whether their learning is at the expected level, below the expected level (emerging) or exceeding the expected level for a child at the end of their time in the Foundation Stage. The records of these assessments are shared with the children and their parents/carers in an appropriate way to help evaluate progress and identify the next steps forwards. They are also shared with the L.E.A. and the Year One class teacher as part of the transition to KS1.

Children will be defined as having reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the expected level in:

- The early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and;
- The early learning goals in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

### **Electronic tracker**

Records and assessments are kept using the EMAG system. Observational assessments are mostly done using the ipad; this includes the use of pictures to evidence children's learning. In addition, assessments of children's achievements made against the curriculum are entered into the EMAG tracker. These are then used to monitor and evaluate individual learning, identify any issues and specific needs. The tracker supports us to deliver a curriculum that is specific to the child's needs. It is also used to assist the completion of the Profile document.

### **Reception Baseline**

At the start of FS2, children are assessed using observations of their child initiated learning and during adult focus activities. This assesses embedded concepts, skills and characteristics of learning. Practitioners make an assessment of each child against 47 assessment statements that cover these Characteristics of Effective Learning, all three Prime Areas (PSED, C&L, PD) and the Specific Areas of Literacy and Maths. Children must be assessed using this on-entry assessment within 6 weeks of entering school. To ensure that children

are assessed at the optimum time, children's levels of well-being and involvement are considered.

### **Transition**

We plan for a phased entry into FS1 in order to facilitate smooth transition and we endeavour to ensure that individual needs are met. Practitioners are flexible and take account of information given by parents and by previous settings. Regular meetings between F1 and F2 staff ensure a common format for planning and provision. There is also a sharing of data and information around children's individual needs.

Several transition visits for children moving from F1 to F2 take place during the half term leading up to the transfer and children, along with their parents are invited to have a school lunch with us.

Towards the end of F2, the children spend a day in their new class, meeting their new teacher and becoming familiar with routines and expectations. Profile data and Learning Journeys are shared along with recent planning.

### **Special Educational Needs**

It is important to ensure early identification of children who find some areas of learning challenging, so that strategies to help them can be put in place as soon as possible. Children will have a child friendly Individual Education Plan which is written by the teacher in consultation with parents, support staff and the child. This will be reviewed regularly as the child progresses. Outside agencies will be consulted in partnership with the SENCO as needed. A one page profile is created and individual planning when necessary.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We will endeavour to raise children's awareness of themselves as individuals and their relationships with others and the outside world. This means questioning our own practice and encouraging the children to question and challenge their practice too. All children will have equal access to all activities irrespective of gender, race or class and where there are cultural differences these will be given consideration.

### **British Values and Global learning**

We promote British values in our setting, through our ethos and through a range of cross curricular activities. These include celebrating British occasions and festivals, teaching kindness, respectfulness to others and empathy. These are reflected in our 'Christian Values' reflection area of the classroom. As part of this learning, children develop mutual tolerance through the understanding and respect for cultural and religious beliefs and their similarities and differences. Being part of a 'Global Learning School' we benefit from a rich and varied curriculum.



Clare Bennison and Melanie Hartley  
Foundation Stage Teacher  
Reviewed date: September 2015  
Reviewed: September 2016.  
Next review: September 2017