

St Alphege CE Infant School

Early years Foundation Stage Policy



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Date of next review: September 2026

Staff Responsible: Gemma Keeble, Early Years Lead

Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School and Sunbeams Nursery Prospectus. At St Alphege we understand the great importance that Early Years Foundation Stage has in enabling children to further thrive in their educational journey. We passionately believe that the children's time in the EYFS not only builds the foundations for their future learning but also develops their social and emotional understanding for their future lives. We also know that children's parents and carers are the child's first teachers. All our Early Years practitioners liaise with families and make effective use of information provided to deliver opportunities that build upon children's experiences and interests. Every child is unique and deserves equal opportunities to access their learning in whichever direction they want to take it. Every practitioner is utterly dedicated to providing a learning experience unique and individual to every child.

"When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow."

Development Matters Sept 2020

Our aims:

- Early Years practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To provide a relevant curriculum with tasks that make sense to the children and are both practical and purposeful.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that children plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must consider the individual needs and interests of each child, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience in all areas of learning and development.
- Practitioners acknowledge the holistic nature of young children's learning and natural links will be made between different areas of the curriculum, with the emphasis on learning through play and the importance of developing speaking and listening skills.
- Practitioners must create a learning environment that develops children's imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- Practitioners must respond to each child emerging needs and interests, guiding development through positive interaction.
- Involve parents and carers.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2024 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

ST ALPHEGE CE INFANT SCHOOL

The EYFS is based upon four early years principles:

- The Unique Child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development



The EYFS Curriculum and Planning

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from January 2024. We also use the non-statutory documents of Development Matters and Birth to 5 as points of reference. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. Care is taken to provide an exciting and engaging curriculum and environments, both inside and outdoors. A huge emphasis is placed upon the children's 'Wellbeing' and 'Involvement' through their interaction with their peers, the adults around them and the activities provided. The 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

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they

have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. 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, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

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. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported 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. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, coordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support 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 helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

There are also four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. 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. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections and are able to explain their reasoning and understanding in full sentences.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The

frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe

The Curriculum

The curriculum is planned through a series of themes that reflect and respond to the children's interests, offering experiences in all the areas of learning and which carry equal importance to provide a broad and balanced curriculum with opportunities for play and child- initiated activities.

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.

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. By the end of the Reception year, the Maths and English lessons that will be in place will be in preparation for children entering Year 1.

Assessment and Record Keeping

See Assessment Policy.

SEND in Early Years

At St Alphege CE Infant School and Sunbeams Nursery appropriate provision is made for children who may have specific learning needs. All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will follow adaptive teaching accordingly. In addition to this where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers will liaise with the Special Needs Co-ordinator accordingly. See SEND policy for further information.

Enabling Environments

Children will be offered a well-planned and well-organised environment in which they can have rich and stimulating experiences both inside and outside where children feel safe and secure and are able to access and develop their learning independently.

Children have regular access to the outdoor learning environment. Equipment is safely stored and children are taught how to keep themselves safe. High quality learning opportunities which occur outside are carefully planned for and regular risk assessments are undertaken. We make best use of the current outdoor spaces.

Safeguarding and Welfare arrangements

Our Safeguarding and Welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy. All staff working within the Early Years have access to Supervision and procedures for this can found in our Supervision Policy.

Induction of Reception Infants and Early Years Policy

Young children entering formal education have many years ahead of them in school. It is therefore important to begin this process in a sensitive and caring manner with our St Alphege values underpinning everything that we do. To settle into school with eagerness and enjoyment can develop the beginning of a love for life-long learning.

At St Alphege we develop excellent communication and relationships with families and children as they start school in a range of ways:-

- Staff visit feeder pre-school settings and share information about each child's learning and interests.
- Stay and Play sessions - where children and families come together to experience activities and meet the EYFS team.
- New Parent meetings – where parents come and receive information about starting school, policy and practice, and link to their new class teacher.
- A comprehensive pack of information including key policies, prospectus etc.
- Activity sessions – where new children come into their classes and get to know the setting, staff and meet their new classmates.
- A 1:1 parent consultation - for information sharing
- Regular parent consultation meetings to discuss achievement and progress.

Transition

- See Early Years Transition Policy for full details

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

This checklist lists the policies and procedures that we must have according the EYFS statutory framework.

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