



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Agreed by governing body – 12/3/24



Ackworth Howard Church of England (VC) Junior and Infant School

Educating for 'life in all its fullness.'

Providing opportunities for growth in mind, body and spirit through inspirational and innovative education underpinned by a deeply Christian ethos. Those who learn and work here will develop confidence, embrace creativity and enhance their knowledge and skills so that they can experience 'life in all its fullness.' (John 10:10)

Ackworth Howard School is rooted in Christian belief and principles and it is a primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, whose values are built on mutual trust and respect for all.

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other times in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential."

(2024 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - EYFS)

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

Together we will create a culture of innovation and challenge which will enable our youngest children to flourish and grow into independent, creative and confident learners.

Legislation

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

Introduction

At Ackworth Howard, we recognise the vital role that parents and carers have in their child's development. We aim to build strong relationships between home and school from the earliest stages of learning. Our aim is for parents to be partners in their child's learning and we encourage opportunities for this partnership to grow as their child moves through the school. Our setting works with parents to develop in every child a love for learning and a desire to expand their horizons and aspirations. Through effective partnerships between home and school, we aim to improve the life opportunities for all children in our care.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from Birth to the End of the Reception year. In our school, children are able to join us in Nursery (15 or 30 hours a week dependent on their entitlement of hours). They start in Nursery the term after they turn 3. They begin attending school full time in September of the academic year in which they turn 5.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

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A Unique Child

At Ackworth Howard School 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, 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Ackworth Howard School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school and diversity is celebrated.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and their interests when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- 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;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe' and they are risk aware. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Policy)

We acknowledge that all children are individuals and we ensure that all children within our care are respected and nurtured regardless of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at varying rates and all children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Early identification of Special Needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/ carers at an early stage and the school SENDCO is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the SEND Policy. Through continuous provision children are able to return to favourite activities and develop their skills and learning at their own pace. It gives them the confidence to persevere.

Our setting seeks to promote the value of healthy lifestyles, good life choices and confident community participation. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging and responsibility and treat their school and others with respect. We will take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well and we carefully follow the guidance as set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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Welfare

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

At Ackworth Howard School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024. We understand that we are required to:

- safeguard children
- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Ackworth Howard School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- the teacher offers to visit all children in their current education settings before they start school
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their new teacher before starting school during transition sessions;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception and Nursery class and allowing free access to the children's 'Learning Journeys';
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents - Inspire Workshops, Class assemblies, Sports Day etc;
- Parents contributing to their child's learning journey through 'wow leaves' and the use of Tapestry (Online Learning Journal)

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teacher (in Nursery and Reception) is the 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS. All children are given a 'key worker' who they spend specific times of the day with for example snack time, planning and review time, circle time, small group time etc.

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The Enabling Environment

Our settings give children opportunities to engage in “first-hand” learning experiences and to access a variety of activities both indoors and outdoors. Play is recognised as an important tool where children develop and reflect on their learning.

At Ackworth Howard we provide knowledgeable, caring and experienced staff who facilitate the learning of our youngest children through:

- Providing opportunities to develop and encourage individuality and independence
- The chance to illuminate imaginations and nurture self-confidence
- Providing a safe learning environment in which children can flourish
- Giving children time to investigate, explore and have fun both inside and outside
- Enabling our children to experience high quality opportunities to explore technology to support their learning and play

The Learning Environment

The EYFS is divided into a FS1 unit and FS2 unit, they are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or quiet and calm. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children’s development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2024 Statutory Framework of the EYFS. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three 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

Educational Programmes

The Educational programmes (as identified in the 2024 Statutory Framework of the EYFS) shape the activities and experiences for the children at Ackworth Howard.

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

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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, co-ordination 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.

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, including small pebbles 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, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

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

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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.

We provide an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs and interests. Our curriculum and provision enables our younger children to experience high quality learning opportunities which support the development of skills and knowledge, stimulate curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and build their capacity to learn.

The learning environment is planned to provide core areas which are available to children all of the time, which is referred to as "continuous provision" and which supports the children's play. It also supports the three characteristics of effective learning as described by "Development Matters in the EYFS".

Planning and Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners 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.

The Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans (MTP's), which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

Learning and Development

At Ackworth Howard School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in the other Key Stages.

Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, 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;

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- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout 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 shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Characteristics of effective learning

Children develop and learn in different ways. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

They foster the characteristics of effective early learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Playing and exploring

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up 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 re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

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

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunities 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.

Observation and Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning process. The adults within our settings observe how children gather information, interact with their peers, solve problems and engage in their play to extend learning.

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Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. 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 should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

Teachers complete a baseline assessment for all children in Nursery and in Reception by the fourth week of term and results of these will be used to inform planning and to make sure that children's learning is moved forward. Staff also make use of any available assessments from any care or nursery setting that the child has attended in the earlier part of the Foundation Stage to inform their assessments and planning. The children in Reception also undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) which is administered within the first six weeks of the child starting in the Reception class.

Assessment in EYFS should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. 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. Children's progress is recorded using a learning journal, tracking document (Insight) and Tapestry software is used to record observations both at home and at school.

At regular points during the year (Data Collection points), information is added to Insight using the assessment bands: Emerging, expected, exceeding. This gives a picture of 'point in time'.

Teachers meet with an SLT member for a termly pupil progress meeting to discuss the progress and attainment of their class. We will analyse data at a whole class level, for specific groups of children and at an individual level. These meetings will identify interventions needed and once in place these will be rigorously monitored for impact.

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 then shared with parents and/or carers.

Transition

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to enable all our children to move from one year group to the next. We acknowledge each child's needs and plan the provision to support a child's emotional well-being during this process.

In our setting we believe that we should all be prepared for the children entering each stage of their learning, so we have developed practice to ensure continuity of learning and a smooth transition for the child.

At Ackworth Howard, we acknowledge the following transitional stages as:

- Home to Nursery
- Nursery to Reception
- Reception to Year One

We believe that best Early Years practice sees learning as a continuum and that our role is to smooth the way between the child's home experience, EYFS Curriculum and the National Curriculum, ensuring

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that the curriculum we provide in KS1 reflects our understanding of the children as learners. We aim to fit the curriculum to the child and not try to fit the child to the curriculum.

Transition is managed in a thoughtful and planned way, taking account of the needs of the young learner.

Our Aims are to ensure our children;

- Experience smooth transition periods
- Receive the EYFS for the duration of Year Nursery and Reception
- Children with identified needs experience a curriculum suited to their needs
- Continue to have opportunities for Continuous Provision in Year One, as appropriate
- Continue to experience teaching that reflects a variety of preferred learning styles

Transition Meetings

All adults will meet in the summer term to discuss the children they will be 'handing over'. Staff will inform colleagues of the pupils' academic abilities, specific needs and any relevant family information whilst bearing in mind confidentiality at all times.

Taster Sessions

Children will be given the opportunity to have a taster session in the class they will be starting in September and will meet their new teacher. Parents will be invited to accompany their child at each stage of Transition.

New Intake Parents Meetings

Meetings will be held during the summer term for all parents whose children are due to enter both Nursery and Reception the following academic year. At these meetings the parents will meet the Foundation Stage Leader and other relevant staff, they find out about activities, routines and are given the opportunity to ask any questions.

All parents are given a copy of the EYFS policy and an 'All about Me' booklet to complete with their child prior to starting with us. Nursery parents are given dates for the taster sessions. Reception parents are given taster session dates, September start dates and extra information on how parents can help their child learn at home.

Transition from EYFS into Year 1

Practitioners and year 1 teachers should work together to ensure that a child's transition between the EYFS and year 1 is seamless. Early years practitioners should make sure children's experiences in the final year of the EYFS are valuable in themselves and prepare the ground for year 1. It is important that year 1 builds on the successful principles and approach encapsulated in the EYFS. It is crucial that EYFS practitioners and year 1 teachers are given time to discuss and expand on the information presented in the EYFS profile.

Requirements of Year 1 Staff

We would like our Year 1 staff to:

- Observe the Reception teaching area at different times during the year to increase their own understanding of the curriculum the children are familiar with.
- Identify opportunities for Continuous Provision (where appropriate) in the Year One curriculum through sharing of ideas and good practice with colleagues.
- Enjoy the freedom to provide a creative approach when delivering the National Curriculum so that children can continue to be actively involved in their learning.
- To fully consider the assessment information produced by EYFS staff and how best to plan for individuals/groups of children.

Good Practice in Year 1

We aim to plan and deliver lessons appropriately, in keeping with the school's wider Teaching and Learning approach. This should ensure that children are not sitting for too long periods and should also plan for the learning activities to be appropriately challenging and delivered effectively. However,

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there are some guiding principles that are felt by the school to be important, particularly when children first enter the Year One classroom in September.

These are:

- The start of the day routine should mirror practice in the Reception classes.
- There should be an initial focus on children's personal, social and emotional development. (Some children settle more quickly than others and staff need to be flexible and allow for this in planning.)
- A strong focus will also be given to Speaking and Listening.
- During the introductions to sessions, we aim to ensure that children are not sitting on the carpet listening for too long.
- The layout of the Year One classroom should include space and resources so that children can undertake continuous provision activities where appropriate.

Care will be taken to ensure the children have settled into the Year One routines and are making steady progress before beginning to introduce more sustained periods of adult-led time during the week. It is anticipated that the majority of Year One children will be able to manage the changes to routines. Staff will take notice of those children who are still failing to flourish within the year group. Individual children may continue to need support as the academic year progresses.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Monitoring arrangements

It is the responsibility of all EYFS staff to follow this policy. Senior Leaders will carry out monitoring across the EYFS and into Year One as part of the whole school monitoring programme.

This policy will be reviewed before the start of each academic year and will evolve to incorporate the views of all staff concerned.