



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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1	November 2023	L Harlin	Front Cover added

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The School Vision and Mission Statement

'Together we learn, independently we grow'.

We believe our school exists to serve the unique academic, physical, social and emotional needs of its students. We are committed to providing the best education for our pupils as they grow and develop through Primary school and towards the next stage of their life and their learning. We embrace Christian values and ensure children are ready for their next steps.

At the Dasset C of E Primary School we put the children at the heart of everything we do. We strive to ensure all of our children receive high-quality education and care and grow to become confident, positive, independent young people who love to learn, to contribute and to achieve. We are an inclusive, caring school and believe that every child matters. We understand that all children have talents, abilities and interests and that our job is to help discover and develop the children's potential. We encourage a strong community spirit, we show consideration and respect for each other with high expectations of kind, considerate and well-mannered behaviour.

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021

The Purpose of the Early Years Policy

The Early Years policy in this school reflects the value and importance of Early Years education, both during and beyond the Foundation Stage. It is a framework which provides guidance on practice and outlines the procedures for planning, teaching and learning, and the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. The policy contributes towards raising educational standards within the school and ensures the needs of the youngest children are met within the context of whole school policies, curriculum planning, agreed teaching approaches and organisational structures. The Early Years curriculum is developed in accordance with the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

Early Years in this setting:

The term Foundation Stage refers to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At the Dasset C of E Primary School, children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. The children attend school full-time from the beginning of the term like the other year groups in the school. If parents and staff decide a child would be best attending part-time to begin with, there is an opportunity for this to happen. There is a private pre-school provision on-site. Therefore, the terms 'early years/foundation stage' in this context refer to children in the Reception class.

This policy reflects the primary aims of the school thereby giving our children a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident, positive, independent young people who love to learn, to contribute and to achieve. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs.

In Reception at The Dasset C of E Primary School we aim to promote the overarching principles:

Four guiding principles shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

In our school, these principles are put into practice by ensuring that we:

- Create a love for coming to school where both staff and children's' health and well-being is of paramount importance and everyone thoroughly **enjoys** their learning experience;
- Create an atmosphere of serving God and others and to nurture an ethos that reflects the school's Christian tradition and values, develops the confidence of all those involved and encourages mutual **respect** for the religious beliefs and cultures of others in our local and global community;
- Encourage all children and adults to strive and **persevere** to improve on their previous personal best in their spiritual, moral, intellectual, and physical development;
- Be an inclusive, safe and **happy** environment that provides equal opportunities so that all can 'live in its fullness.'
- Provide an exciting, challenging and active learning environment which establishes a working partnership between school, home and the community that achieves excellence in work, behaviour and attendance;
- Develop **confident, positive and independent** learners who are able to make informed choices.
- Gain self-esteem and personal **responsibility**, linked to respect for the needs and feelings of others.
- Provide lots of opportunities to promote early language and ways in which to extend vocabulary
- Promote healthy lifestyles and personal well-being, through a broad and consistent education linked to personal, social and emotional awareness.

- Facilitate positive relationships between all members of the school community.
- Promote a thoughtful attitude towards the immediate and wider environment.

Aims:

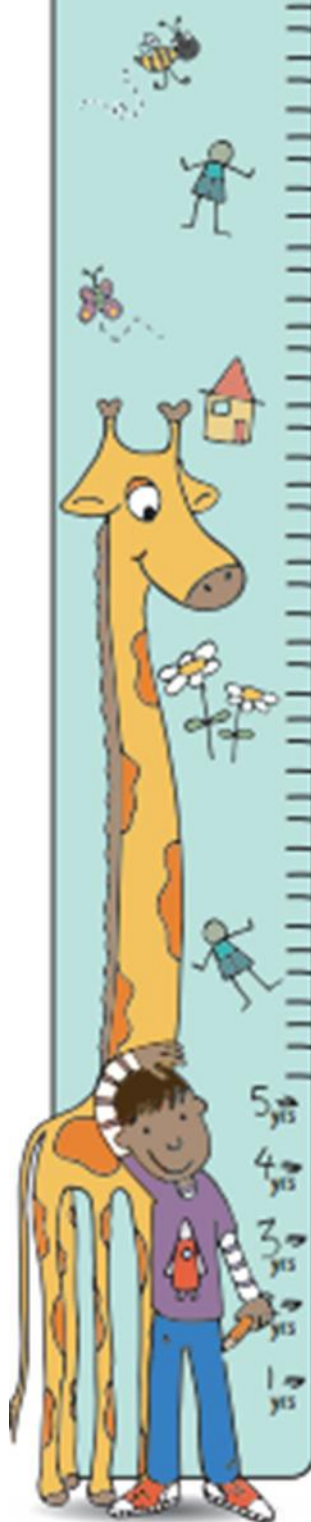
At the Dassett C of E Primary School we endorse the aims, principles and commitments of the EYFS. The following aims and principles underpin practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage at The Dassett C of E Primary School and shares a vision of how children develop and learn, of the activities and experiences which help children make progress, and the type of stimulating environment which promotes opportunities for learning.

The Dassett C of E Primary School aims to support each pupil's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Ensuring Early Years education is valued, seen as the foundation for education and the beginning of a continuum of learning throughout the primary phase.
- Providing children with a broad and balanced curriculum which is in line with the EYFS statutory framework.
- Identifying and providing provision for special educational needs of children.
- Providing an active learning environment with 'purposeful play', 'first hand' experiences and an active curriculum which is recognised in planning learning opportunities for young children.
- Sharing an understanding of the emotional needs of young children, how they learn and develop skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making skills.
- Ensuring a smooth transition experience from home, pre-school or nursery, into the Reception class.
- Providing a safe, securing and caring environment.
- Enabling pupils, parents and staff member to feel valued and respected as part of the school community.

We recognise the importance of features of effective practice and strive to achieve this in all that we do.

Seven Features of Effective Practice



1 The best for every child

- All children deserve to have an equal chance of success.



- High-quality early education is good for all children. It is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- When they start school, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 4 months behind their peers. We need to do more to narrow that gap.



- Children who have lived through difficult experiences can begin to grow stronger when they experience high quality early education and care.

- High-quality early education and care is inclusive. Children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning.

2 High-quality care

- The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner.

- Babies, toddlers and young children thrive when they are loved and well cared for.



- High-quality care is consistent. Every practitioner needs to enjoy spending time with young children.

- Effective practitioners are responsive to children and babies. They notice when a baby looks towards them and gurgles and respond with pleasure.

- Practitioners understand that toddlers are learning to be independent, so they will sometimes get frustrated.

- Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for small children.



3 The curriculum: what we want children to learn

- The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.



- Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.

- The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.

- Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.

- Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line.



- Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.

4

Pedagogy: helping children to learn

- Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help.

- Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.



- Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning.

- Children in the early years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning.

- Older children need more of this guided learning.

- A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy.



5

Assessment: checking what children have learnt

- Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.



- Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.



- Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.

- Before assessing children, it's a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful.

- Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.

6

Self-regulation and executive function

- Executive function includes the child's ability to:

- hold information in mind
- focus their attention
- think flexibly
- inhibit impulsive behaviour.



- These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:

- concentrate their thinking
- plan what to do next
- monitor what they are doing and adapt
- regulate strong feelings
- be patient for what they want
- bounce back when things get difficult.

- Language development is central to self-regulation: children use language to guide their actions and plans.

- Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.



7

Partnership with parents

- It is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.

- This includes listening regularly to parents and giving parents clear information about their children's progress.



- The help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on their learning.

- Some children get much less support for their learning at home than others. By knowing and understanding all the children and their families, settings can offer extra help to those who need it most.



- It is important to encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children.

Staffing:

All staff involved in the education of young children need to be able to develop good relationships with the children in their care so that they can feel secure, respected and thus able both to make mistakes and cope with minor failures as well as building confidently on their successes.

Early Years Foundation Stage provision is led by the Reception Class Teacher who is supported by a full-time teaching assistant.

Early Years provision, organisation and the learning environment:

Early Years provision at The Dasset C of E School is organised into a one-form entry Reception class with a maximum of 30 pupils aged 4-5.

The classroom is set up to offer continuous provision to the children both indoors and outdoors. The provision includes opportunities for the children to independently access reading, writing, shape, number, capacity, arts and crafts, construction, small world, role play, fine motor skills activities, gross motor skills activities, water and sand play and investigation. The children also have access to other equipment and facilities throughout the school, including the library, the school hall, playground, field, iPads / laptops and a Forest School area.

The staff in Reception class all have specialist training, knowledge and expertise in working with young children and work in partnership with the Nursery and KS1 staff and other professionals e.g. Educational Psychologists and speech and language specialists to provide a multi-disciplinary team.

Induction / Parental Involvement:

In the last few weeks of the Summer term, prior to children starting Reception, parents are encouraged to arrange a time in the first week of September for either a meeting in school or a home-visit from the Reception Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant to develop or enhance existing relationships between staff, parents and the child. This is also an opportunity for parents to raise any queries or share information with the school.

During the Summer term, there are three/four induction mornings for the children to come into our Reception setting to meet the staff and their peers. They will also be able to explore their new indoor and outdoor classroom.

In July, the school collects transfer information from the children's previous pre-school and nursery and visits each nursery and pre-school to discuss any extra useful information. This information helps us to learn more about each child prior to them starting school.

Parents will be invited to an EYFS information meeting in the Summer term led by the Reception Class Teacher. At this meeting there is also the opportunity for parents to meet the Head Teacher, Chair of Governors and the Reception class Teaching Assistant.

This programme of home visits and meetings enables parents to share valuable information to help pupils achieve a smooth transition from home to school and allows parents to ask any questions or voice any concerns they may have about their child starting school.

At the Dasset C of E Primary School we recognise that effective partnership with parents and carers has a positive impact on children's development and learning, and therefore aim to provide opportunities for parents and carers to keep staff informed about all aspects of their child's development.

The use of 'Tapestry' an online learning journal allows the Reception teacher to build strong communication links with children and families to share information and achievements.

Parents are invited into school in the Autumn term for an information evening regarding the teaching of phonics and early maths. This enables parents to support their child at home with confidence.

Classroom Routines:

Reception children come straight into the classroom on arrival at school through the front door entrance to the school. The children will attend daily whole school or key stage assemblies and the vicar's assembly. Lunch time for Reception children is with the rest of the school from 12:00 to 13:00. Children have their lunch in the hall at 12:00 followed by playtime on the school playground supervised by the midday supervisors.

The Reception Class teacher will inform parents of the main areas of focus across all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, through the school website. This enables parents to support their child with learning opportunities at home. Parents are also welcome to contact the Reception teacher via Email or Tapestry, or organise a meeting after school to discuss any worries or queries they may have. With parent's permission, photographs of pupils' achievements are shared on the school website and group observations via Tapestry.

When educational visits are planned the Reception Class teacher informs parents by email or letter, risk assessments are completed and adult to child ratios are upheld.

Two parents' evenings are held (one during Autumn term and the other during Spring term) to enable parents to come into school to participate in a ten-minute discussion with the class teacher. Parents are also invited to look at examples of their children's work.

In Reception class, parents may also be invited in to see Reception children perform. For example, sharing a story or performing songs.

Early Years Curriculum

At the Dasset C of E Primary School we offer a broad and balanced curriculum in line with the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework, 2021. This framework is planned to lead smoothly into the National Curriculum at KS1 in a way which is relevant and meaningful for all children. The foundation stage curriculum stresses the importance of the child's personal and social development, emphasises early literacy, numeracy and lays the foundation for the future learning of all children.

Children in the early years learn in a variety of ways: by watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. *'Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge.'*

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three prime areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

Prime areas:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development
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There are four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts & design
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However, we recognise that children's learning is holistic and that children neither recognise nor benefit from being confined within subject boundaries. We aim to provide a coherent curriculum that provides a clear focus for learning and draws together relevant activities which contribute to the development of the whole child.

At The Dasset C of E Primary School, children are encouraged and supported to achieve the 'Early Learning Goal' in each seven areas of learning by the end of Reception. 'Development Matters' and 'Birth to 5' helps staff identify children's developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes as they make progress towards the early learning goals, throughout the foundation stage.

Upon starting school, children will complete the Reception baseline assessment, a national assessment for pupils in reception to measure their progress in primary schools.

The class teacher will assess the children using their own professional judgement, evidence of pupils learning and will be guided by development matters to track children's progression towards the Early Learning Goals. The teacher is responsible for making sure that children are making progress towards the Early Learning Goals within independent and adult-led activities and will ensure that any gaps are identified and interventions will be put in place to support the child's learning.

The curriculum in Reception at The Dasset C of E Primary School is organised into a focus for each half term, each focus will have key texts that children will explore. Each area of learning is taught where possible with links to the current focus. Along with the rest of the school, Reception use Cornerstones to create comprehensive plans which ensure coverage and progression for the seven areas of learning and will develop children's knowledge and understanding over the year for them to meet the Early Learning Goals.

The wider curriculum at The Dasset C of E Primary School consists of:

- Educational visits and visitors
- Outdoor play provision
- Forest School
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Children have weekly PE and Forest School sessions. RE is also taught weekly. PSED focused activities are linked to protective behaviours at the beginning of the year, followed by a continuation of PSED to develop the skills needed as the children grow throughout the year.

Forest School is carried out in the school's Forest School area once a week on a Thursday afternoon. This takes place at the bottom of our school field.

Each child will read with a teacher or teaching assistant twice a week during our individual reading and guided reading sessions.

A Foundation Stage Profile is completed by the end of the Reception year for each child to show if they are on track to meet age related expectation and meet GLD. We use iPads and Tapestry to gather purposeful and meaningful photographic evidence for the children's individual and our class carpet book learning journal. Parents will be able to receive notifications of the observations and regular updates of their child's learning and progress.

Formal assessment tracking is recorded in school every half term to identify children who need extra challenge and those that may need support in specific areas. Tracking also helps us to develop our teaching focus to promote areas that may need enhancing to develop and deepen children's understanding.

Reporting to Parents:

Reporting to parents takes place through informal discussions, face to face contact, Parents Evenings during the Autumn and Spring terms and an annual written report. The report will include comments about the seven areas of learning and if the child has met the Early Learning Goals. There will also be a comment about how your child learns best linked to the characteristics of effective learning which will include:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically.
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Regular monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum takes place within the Reception class. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are undertaken by the senior management team. Following discussions with the school's SENCO, external professional agencies and parents/carers, children with additional needs or who need extra intervention will be identified and added to the class provision map for extra support.

Intimate Care:

Intimate care is any 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 with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

Staff Development:

Staff attend CPD throughout the year as appropriate to their professional development wants and needs. The identification of training needs for teaching and non-teaching staff will take place through Performance management.

Safety:

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make good choices and assess potential risks.

Statement on Equality:

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.