



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy was reviewed by: Jane Taylor

Ratified by the Governing Body - February 2024

Reviewed date - February 2026

“For learning, smiling and remembering”

Purpose

This policy reflects how, at Avondale, we value the importance of Early Years education and the right of every child to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic wellbeing. It provides a framework which gives guidance on Early Years practice. It describes procedures for planning, teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. This policy is intended to support and encourage staff in meeting the statutory requirements and in the delivery of high quality experiences for children's learning and development. It is written in light of the publication of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (2024), Every Child Matters (ECM) and in the context of our vision for the provision of high quality play experiences for all children.

It is also intended for Governors, parents, inspection teams, Local Authority Advisory/Improvement Officers and copies are available upon request from the school office.

'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 time 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.' **(EYFS Framework, Page 7 2024)**

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

Principles

Four guiding principles shape our EYFS practice at Avondale Primary School. 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers:
- Children **learn and develop** in different ways and at different rates.

Children learn in different ways. At Avondale, we ensure that every learning style is catered for. In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and support these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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; and
- Creating and Thinking Critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

We use these 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' to shape our practices; in observing, interacting and planning provision. We provide opportunities for children to become engaged, motivated and to think critically.

A Unique Child

At Avondale Primary 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 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 Avondale Primary School are valued and treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

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 when planning for their learning.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We liaise closely with all relevant professionals in order to provide early support for those children and their families who need it.

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.

Safeguarding

It is paramount that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist, this also includes online safety. 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 Avondale's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy 2024)

At Avondale Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers (2024).

"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." **(EYFS Framework 2024, Page 23)**

We understand that we are required to:

- Safeguard children.
- Promote the safety and 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 all staff have access to regular CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and supervision

- 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. Every child is assigned to a 'Key Person' to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs

At Avondale Primary School, we train all staff to understand the safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues. Staff have access to CPOMs safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour.

Training enables staff to identify signs of possible abuse and neglect at the earliest opportunity, and to respond in a timely and appropriate way.

These may include:

- Significant changes in children's behaviour;
- Deterioration in children's general well-being;
- Unexplained bruising, marks or signs of possible abuse or neglect;
- Children's comments which give cause for concern;
- Any reasons to suspect neglect or abuse outside the setting, for example in the child's home;
- Inappropriate behaviour displayed by other members of staff, or any other person working with the children.

Supervision

At Avondale staff have opportunities to meet for group and individual supervision, to discuss development and well-being of individuals, review current practice, plan and assessments. Staff are aware if there are any concerns regarding children they can speak directly with the designated safeguarding lead.

In addition to this, staff receive an annual appraisal or professional development meeting which identifies any professional development opportunities or training needs. Staff working in the Early Years attend termly cluster meetings and LA moderation meetings, which provide up to date information, training needs and a platform to discuss any issues or developments.

Positive Relationships

At Avondale Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through forming 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 form and maintain positive relationships with parents through:

- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- talking to parents about their child prior to starting school during our induction sessions and through parental questionnaires;

- encouraging parents to talk to our staff if there are any concerns either informally or formally;
- holding various parental drop-in sessions and parents' evenings throughout the school year;
- encouraging parents to contribute towards their child's learning (wow moments, drop-in sessions, mid-term reviews).
- arranging for children to start school gradually during the first week of term. The starting time for children during this period is staggered so that the teacher can welcome children to our school in smaller groups and help them to become familiar with school routines.
- encouraging parents to take an active part in school life;
- offering a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, parents and school, such as curriculum workshops;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through reception newsletters and the reception learning blog.
- parental curriculum workshops
- developing home-school links through our pupil well-being leader.

Induction

Children join Avondale often having attended one or more of the pre-schools and nurseries within our local area. Our admission arrangements are carefully organised and regularly reviewed to ensure that all parties are happy, confident and fully informed about all aspects of induction.

The aim of our induction programme is to establish a clear and full picture of each child and be able to immediately incorporate and plan learning activities and opportunities that will interest, excite and begin to meet their individual needs from the children's very first day at school.

Some of our induction procedures include:

- Children have the opportunity to spend time with their lead teacher before starting school during transition sessions & a transition morning.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- New intake webpage for parents on school website.
- Nursery visits and transition meetings from the EYFS teachers and other key workers.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's lead teacher and other key workers if there are any concerns.
- There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress in private.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each term.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents. These include Celebration Assemblies, Reception Performances, Sports Events Creativity/Curriculum afternoons etc.

All staff involved with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage aim to develop good and warm relationships, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At Avondale, the EYFS teacher acts a 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the teaching assistants, where the children are split into Key Worker groups.

"The best kind of teacher is one who helps you do what you couldn't do for yourself but doesn't do it for you"
("Teaching Children to think" by Robert Fisher, Nelson Thornes 1990)

(See whole school Transition and Induction Policy for more details)

Enabling Environments

At Avondale Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS (Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans), are based around themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers 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.

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. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journey' on Target Tracker. They also contain information provided by parents and carers from home.

At Avondale Primary School, we use Development Matters Trackers to record judgements against the EYFS Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against 17 assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs and assessment scales.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

- All pupils will be assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment, within the first 6 weeks of joining the Reception, regardless of when they join the class, unless they have been assessed previously.

The Learning Environment

A high quality environment is key to our success and at Avondale pupils access learning across a large EYFS unit. It is the shared responsibility of staff and children to care for the environment both indoors and outdoors. Staff take pride in developing areas of continuous provision and displays which enhance and broaden opportunities.

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. The EYFS unit is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS unit has its 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 allows the children 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.

We are committed to providing high quality continuous provision. Areas are established and maintained, long term plans are displayed in areas, with short term planning detailing enhancements. Areas are audited and resources replenished regularly. Resources are labelled and organised to aid self-selection and our provision reflects the cultures and community that we serve. Risk assessments, where appropriate, are in place and areas are print rich.

Learning and Development

At Avondale Primary 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 interconnected.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

Prime areas:

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

Specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. Each cohort of children may have very different needs and we plan according to that need, having high aspirations for all children.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The SLT and Subject Leaders will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Internal mechanisms regarding monitoring quality include:

- observations of teaching and learning
- peer observations
- data analysis
- performance management and appraisal
- supervision
- consultations
- action planning and target setting
- policy review

Mrs Taylor is the lead professional for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The role of lead professional is to ensure high standards and academic success within the EYFS. We respond appropriately to local and national initiatives. Regular self-evaluation of our practice helps inform our School Evaluation Form (SEF) and informs the continuous professional development (CPD) of all practitioners.

The role of the EYFS lead is defined in detail in the subject leader job description and is linked to teacher appraisal.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the Online Safety Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.

This EYFS Policy reflects the ethos, values and practices of all our school policies. All relevant legislation and guidance has been adhered to in developing this policy.