

## **Gargrave CE (VC) Primary School**

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

“Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. All children deserve to have an equal chance of success. When we give 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 2023)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, all children join us in Apple Class, full time, at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

#### **A Unique Child**

At Gargrave 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 can be influenced by others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

#### **Positive Relationships**

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

#### **Inclusion**

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best; we take into account each child’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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.

We will provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are more developed. We will monitor children’s progress and take action to provide support as needed. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the Speech and Language service and the Educational Psychologist.

We will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents and carers of their opportunity to apply for their child’s entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will benefit from the most. We will track the child’s progress to ensure they are making good progress and to ensure their support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child’s needs change and develop.

## **Parents and Carers as Partners**

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we recognise the huge contribution that they can make to their child's learning and development; we work hard to develop and sustain strong links with our parents and carers.

We do this through:

- Opportunities to visit our school during the school day to meet staff and see how our classroom works
- Inviting parents to an 'New Starters Information Evening' prior to their child starting school
- Access to children's learning journeys and work books
- Staff always on hand at the start and end of the school day
- Daily planner in which messages can be written by staff and parents
- Class email address that parents and carers can communicate through
- Parents' evenings are held three times each year
- Celebration assemblies are held termly for parents/carers and families to attend before visiting the classroom to look at work their child has been doing
- Phonics and Early Reading workshops to which parents and carers can attend

At our school, the EYFS teacher acts as a 'Key person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistant.

## **Enabling Environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations, we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

## **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

On entry into Reception, children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed using the statutory baseline assessment as well as our own baselining assessment. We make ongoing observations of children's learning, using this information to ensure that future planning for the environment reflects the needs of our learners and any next steps.

Throughout the Reception year, assessments are made using observations of the children in adult-led and child-initiated activities, during independent play and through discussions with parents and carers. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us plan for children's next steps in their learning. Each child has a 'Learning Journey' in which we keep samples of the children's work.

Parents and carers are informed of their child's progress during parents' evenings early in the Autumn term and Spring term. Within the final term of the EYFS, we assess the children's level of development within the Early Learning Goals. These results are shared with parents and carers along with an end of year report, with the option of discussing these at a parents' evening.

## **Learning and Development**

Our learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely, at different rates. We value all areas of learning equally and understand they are all interlinked. The learning environment is arranged, both in and outdoors, so that the children are able to access equipment and resources independently. The indoor classroom is organised into the areas of learning with the outdoor area being easily accessible from the classroom. Learning outdoors allows children to explore and learn on a bigger scale and in different ways to indoors, having a positive effect on development; it offers the opportunity to explore, use their sense and be physically active.

## **Welfare**

At Gargrave Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 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.” (Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2024)

We understand we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children by implementing procedures to safeguard children
- Promote good health
- 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 are suitable to do so
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and fit for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs
- Maintain school records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

## **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

- There are 3 Prime areas:
  - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - Communication and Language
  - Physical Development
- There are 4 Specific areas through which the 3 Prime areas are strengthened and applied.
  - Literacy
  - Mathematics
  - Understanding the World
  - Expressive Arts and Design

At Gargrave, all areas are delivered through a well-planned play-based approach, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other.

Throughout the foundation stage, our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every areas at the appropriate developmental level. Our long-term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a termly topic-based approach while allowing flexibility to ensure that children’s needs and interests are taken into account and developed.

## **Play**

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences as their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The EYFS includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and we plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world about them. The three characteristics are:

**Play 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.

**Creative and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

S Spensley

2.5.24

Approved by Governors: