

## **Gargrave C of E Primary School**

### **Early Years Policy**

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 are five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

#### **A Unique Child**

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.

#### **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.

#### **Learning and development**

Our learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The activities are arranged so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

#### **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of three prime area of learning:

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

There are four specific areas of learning:

- 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. 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 area 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 (ELG's) 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.

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 (ELG's) that define the expectations for children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

## **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 at 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 also 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 around them. The three characteristics 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;

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

### **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 do this by taking account of our children'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 learning 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 necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service and the educational psychologist.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

### **Assessment**

Throughout Reception, children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources; observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child in Reception has a 'Learning Journey' in which we record our observations and keep samples of the children's work.

Reception children will be assessed during the first three weeks of school against learning statements in maths, literacy and PSED to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future

learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play. There will not be any form of testing and parent's views on their child as a learner will be taken into account.

Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum.

Our children's knowledge, skills and understanding will continue to be tracked throughout the foundation stage and assessed against the ELG's at the end of Reception to establish an end of foundation stage achievement and learning profile for each child in preparation for their transition to Key Stage one.

### **Transitions**

At Gargrave, we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. We have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

A parents' meeting is held in the summer term before the children start school to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. All parents are offered a home visit prior to their child starting school. This gives children the security of meeting with their teachers in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. In the summer term, children attending the local pre-school have the opportunity to come to Apple Class on a weekly basis, taking part in activities such as singing. There are also three planned transition visits to the school to help children prepare for their new experiences in Apple Class.

Throughout the Reception year, when children are ready, they are gradually introduced to whole school activities such as Collective Worship and assemblies.

Approved by Governors: \*\*\*\*\*, 2020

Review date: \*\*\*\*\*, 2021