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Committee responsible for review	Curriculum

Aston Clinton School

Together we: Aspire, Care and Succeed



Early Years Policy

Introduction

At Aston Clinton School we aim to work in close partnership with parents, carers and pre-school settings to enable each child to begin the process of becoming an active learner for life by providing a positive springboard to their education through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Aims of the EYFS at Aston Clinton School

Our Foundation Stage is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We believe that all children should be able to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally. We are committed to our setting being a safe and inclusive setting where children are nurtured and learning is encouraged in a caring and stimulating environment. We all want our Foundation Stage to be a happy place where good behaviour is expected and all children enjoy their educational journey.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

The 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) refers to children from Birth to the end of the Reception class. It sets out a series of Early Learning Goals (ELG's) for children to work towards by the time they reach the end of EYFS at the age of 5+. Whilst the expectation is that most children will achieve the ELG's at the end of the Reception year, all children will be provided with experiences to support them in reaching the goals at the relevant time.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

Learning is developed through planned and purposeful play with a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is absolutely essential for children's development building confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and to relate to others. These are all key life skills.

In Aston Clinton School Foundation Stage we are passionate about children's play and their initiated learning as it regularly produces the highest level of learning and is often a springboard for other children and their ideas too.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.

Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways by:

- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

Planning the EYFS curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the early learning goals.

Learning in the 'Prime Areas' develops quickly in response to the children's experiences and relationships within the setting and support learning in all other areas.

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

The 'Specific Areas' build on from the Prime Areas and provide essential skills and knowledge.

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

Learning experiences are planned for both indoors and outside and are linked through topic themes and children's own interests.

In the Foundation Stage at Aston Clinton School we place great value on the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' which give a clear insight into how individual children learn best. They underpin all areas of learning and development.

- Playing and exploring – engagement
- Active Learning – motivation
- Creating and thinking critically – thinking and making links

No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make strong links between what they are learning. All areas of 'Learning and Development' are given equal weighting and value. To support our teaching of phonics we use Little Wandle to plan the order we teach the sounds. Children are heard to read in groups and staff ensure that the children have group or individual keep-up intervention to support the development of their phonetical knowledge. We use Little Wandle mnemonics to support the children's letter formation.

Indoor/outdoor environments

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free flow between inside and outside.

The indoor environment will have designated areas for;

Creativity, role play, small world, construction, sensory and malleable activities, water play, reading, quiet reading and games, numeracy, investigations, understanding the world, construction and fine motor skills. There will be writing opportunities throughout the provision.

The outdoor environment will have provision for opportunities to explore and develop;

Physical development (including gross motor development), creative role play and performance, art and design, music, sand, water, literacy, numeracy, discovery, understanding the world, and investigation and team work.

The environment is purposefully set up to allow the children to become resourceful independent learners who are excited and keen to challenge themselves in their learning and who are able to work co-operatively with others.

Planning

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Teachers write long term plans based on seasonal events and children's interests, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans then inform the short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses. In addition, we plan 'In the Moment' to respond to children's interests and needs in order to maximise impact and move them to the next steps of their learning. This approach enables us to focus on developing the characteristics of learning within the children's play and these are recorded through observations.

Assessment

At Aston Clinton School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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 shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at Aston Clinton School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies.

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;
- Updating the SEN support plan termly for identified children.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Staff at Aston Clinton School use Tapestry as a way for parents to share their child's home learning experiences with the school and as a way to triangulate to information.

Before children enter reception, parents are invited into school in June for an Induction meeting which is an opportunity to hear about the school day, learning expectations, to meet staff and to ask any questions. Pamphlets offering advice on readiness for school and links to the curriculum framework are shared with parents.

In the Autumn and Spring terms, there are consultation evening for parents in the autumn and spring terms to discuss their child's progress.

In addition, a weekly reception newsletter is sent home to parents to inform them of the curriculum content for the next week, upcoming events, themes plus ideas of activities to try at home to enrich the EYFS curriculum.

Opportunities are given to involve families in coming into school to share their cultures and traditions with the children; these opportunities can include sharing dual language reading books, preparing and eating different foods and craft making.

Transition

Pre-school to school

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. We acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with local pre-schools, nurseries and child minders. Children attend introductory sessions to Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners and are asked to complete and 'All about Me' sheet with their adult at home to be shared and celebrated with reception staff after the summer holidays.

We assign each child to a class with a named class teacher. The teacher is the key person for the children in their class. The teacher helps the child become familiar with the classroom and school, offers a settled start for the child and builds a relationship with their parents. The teaching assistants in the Foundation Stage support the teachers with this approach.

The class teacher begins visits to pre-school settings within the summer term after the County allocations. In July each child attends the Induction Morning in the Foundation Stage with their new staff members. All children are given transition booklets with photographs of the staff and school, and their class teacher to support them in their transition.

Foundation Stage to Year 1

In the final term of Reception, the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Safeguarding and welfare

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 choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health, including oral hygiene, of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, water and milk and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate policies for additional information: Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety and Medicine in Schools.

Admissions

The school's admission arrangements are as described by the Buckinghamshire Authority for all County schools. Arrangements for Admission to the school should be made through the Education Authority Office, County Hall, Aylesbury, Bucks, HP20 1UZ