



# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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 September 2025

## Overview

In our Early Years we will help all children to have excellent foundations for learning. We will make learning fun and instil a love of learning that ensures that the children develop and progress as they move through school. We will use Development Matters as a basis for planning and use a range of strategies to develop the whole child, ensuring children achieve and progress in both the prime and specific areas of the curriculum.

## Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a secure and nurturing atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

## Provision

In our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) we aim to provide a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum which addresses the children's social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure, stimulating environment.

Our curriculum follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

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 are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration 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. We value our use of Tapestry, our online journal, which ensures communication between home and school is strong.

### **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 foundation stage has three classrooms and a large outdoor shared area. All our learning environments are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Our environment is designed so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The prime areas being:

- Personal, Emotional and Social Development (PSED)
- Communication and language
- Physical development

The specific areas are:

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

Children follow a consistent daily routine, which is reviewed at least half termly. There is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. The role of the adult is essential towards the progress in learning and development for all children. The learning environment consists of three class bases and an outside learning environment, which reflects all seven areas of learning. The class bases each have a book area but essentially have a range of different resources in order to give the children the widest possible range of experiences. Enhanced Provision supports continuous provision planning for high quality learning experiences, which support learning in all seven areas of the EYFS, both indoors and outdoors.

The children follow a daily routine, which is reviewed in accordance with the children's developing needs. Each session (morning and afternoon) includes a significant period of time for child-initiated learning, known as discovery time, where children have time to plan, do and review, following their own interests. During discovery time, children can have opportunity to explore inside and outside the classroom. High quality adult interactions during discovery time are essential in order to support and/or challenge children's learning. Observations from child initiated learning are made and used as evidence of children's independent learning. From observations, teachers plan to follow children's interests and plan a range of experiences and visits to develop children's language and vocabulary.

Adult-led activities include whole class and key group story and reading time, phonics following the Read, Write Inc. programme, mathematics, gross and fine motor skills and outside singing activities as well as a focus on social and emotional skills using the My Happy Mind program and language development.

Over time and by the summer term the children will experience more adult directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

### **The Importance of Play**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them.

Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They 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 experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between discovery time and adult led activities is very important to us.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We believe that the characteristics of learning are vitally important when taking into account a child's learning and development. They 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.

When teaching and observing, staff take these into account and highlight any areas where children may need additional support or input. These are woven into all aspects of teaching and learning within our year group.

### **British Values**

Through personal, social and emotional development, fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs, are introduced and embedded. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum. When appropriate we demonstrate democracy in action, and support the decisions that children make and ensure they are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities. We allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions.

### **Special Educational Needs**

All pupils have access to a broad, balanced curriculum, using the EYFS as a basis. Children with SEND are encouraged to take part in all learning experiences in Early Years when and where possible. Provision for pupils with SEND is the joint responsibility of the class teacher, SENCo, Head Teacher and any support staff involved with the pupil concerned. Teachers ensure that planning takes into account the different skills of their pupils and work is differentiated accordingly.

### **Equal Opportunities**

In our Early Years we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

### **Observation, Assessment, Planning Cycle**

Adults interact and observe children in their everyday activities, considering what children can do and are interested in. They assess by identifying where the child is in their learning and development within the Development Matters document.

Teachers plan what adults can do to support and challenge and how to enhance the environment to strengthen and deepen the observed learning and development.

Observations are recorded by all staff using school tablets; they include written accounts, photos, videos, sound recordings and children's mark making. These observations are uploaded to each child's on-line learning journey on 'Tapestry'.

Observations inputted onto Tapestry are moderated by the teacher before being added to the child's learning journal. A separate learning journey of children's writing is kept. Assessments are made at the end of every half term and progress tracked. These assessments inform children's next steps. At the end of Early Years each child is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG).

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. This includes virtual or in-person moderation meetings, visits from children and staff before starting school, and staff liaising about children with their pre-schools.

In the summer term, we start building a picture of the child requesting friendship groups, preschool they attend any medical needs and SEND requirements. Each class teacher records a welcome to our class video.

At the start of the autumn term, we hold individual visits in class. The class is divided in half and has two stay and play visits with a parent followed by two visits without a parent.

In the final term the early years team moderate the EYFSP with Year 1 teachers and set up meetings to plan a smooth transition, which includes meeting the children in the early years environment, inviting them to the Year 1 classrooms, planning for Year 1 using the EYFSP. Early Years staff discuss the characteristics of effective learning and the EYFSP to help Year 1 plan an appropriate curriculum for their new intake.

### **Parental Involvement**

Parental involvement is crucial in the early years at school and at Tavistock we encourage parents to be involved in a variety of ways:

- The Induction Programme – this involves an individual classroom visit and four stay and play sessions.
- To speak to class teachers at the start and end of the school day or book a telephone meeting.
- A variety of power points on our website, which give parents information on how to help their children to learn and different aspects of the Early Years Curriculum.

- Virtual or in-person Parents' evenings in the autumn and spring terms to give parents the opportunity discuss their child's learning and development with the class teacher. An end of year report is written in the summer term.
- Parents will be encouraged to contribute to Tapestry by uploading children's achievements at home.

### **Health & safety and safeguarding**

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and the Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance (2023).

In order to keep children and staff safe: No staff may use or take photos with their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom.