



Abbey Primary School

AIM ~ ASPIRE ~ ACHIEVE

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Reviewed: September 2026

Reviewed by: Jo Cahill

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Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday. At Abbeys, children join the Foundation Stage class the academic year they will turn 5. We have capacity for a 45-place provision within 2 classes. This feeds into more formal education from Year 1 to Year 6 in the school.

The EYFS is statutory and is detailed under the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* and the *Practical Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*.

Our Curriculum Aims:

- We aim to make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun.
- We aim to foster a love of learning and develop enquiring minds.
- We aim to instil the Characteristics of Effective Learning such as independence, resilience and confidence, in addition to introducing Abbeys 11 core values.
- We aim to promote emotional well-being.
- We aim to build positive relationships and work in partnership with families.
- We aim to provide children with a secure grounding in the core skills necessary for them to continue to be successful in Year 1 and beyond.

“When we succeed in giving 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 Sept 2020

We follow the statutory framework and guidance detailed in the EYFS curriculum and Development Matters to structure our broad and balanced curriculum. The Development Matters statements are used to support assessment throughout the year, leading to the Early Learning Goals at the end of the Year.

We provide a broad and balanced Early Years curriculum:

- based on first hand experiences and purposeful interactions,
- through carefully planned adult lead inputs and planned provision enhancements as well as an appropriate continuous provision on offer to allow child-initiated activities to occur as well,
- whilst having a regard for the skills and attitudes the Key Stage One curriculum will demand,
- using Read, Write Inc. Phonics and Mastering Number/ White Rose Maths (Building Strong Foundations) to structure our phonics and maths planning and delivery as well as IAACW/Drawing Club/ Talk Through Stories to support communication and language development, imagination and creative as well as mark making and writing.

Planning for the EYFS Curriculum:

The EYFS is statutory and is important in its own right as a basis for developing essential skills such as listening, speaking, persistence and collaborating with each other. The three prime areas cover the knowledge and skills which are the foundations for future progress, and which are applied and reinforced by the specific areas. All areas of learning are equally important and are interlinked.

The Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals guide our long-term planning, broken down into half termly topics. Many planned activities are cross curricular. They are based around the children's current needs, schemas and interests whilst ensuring all areas of the EYFS curriculum are covered.

We plan using long-term planning overviews, medium term topic-based plans and weekly for English, Maths, Topic and Phonics. Children's learning is not necessarily sequential and staff understand that learners need time to retrieve, consolidate, repeat and extend their learning in different ways. All planning is evaluated on an on-going basis and adapted in response to the children's needs and interests as well as adjustments in key calendar dates.

Within this overarching plan, we adjust our provision to include additional enrichment opportunities, such as trips or visitors and link learning to events taking place in the wider world as much as possible. For example, religious celebrations throughout the year, national or world-wide events (such as an anniversary of a historic event or sporting events like the Olympics), as well as local events (such as the Bletchley Carnival.)

The Learning Environment and Resources in the EYFS at Abbeys:

The Foundation Stage learning environment encompasses both indoor and outdoor provision, which are of equal importance. The outdoor provision is an extension of the indoor offer, rather than a mirror of it, allowing children opportunities to work on a larger scale and in a range of environmental/weather conditions. The layout of our learning environment is carefully planned to provide opportunities to support and enhance children's learning through collaborative, exploratory, risk taking play in different areas of the curriculum.

A core provision remains throughout the year and this is regularly enhanced based on the children's interests and stages of development. Consideration is given to identified areas of weakness in the baseline assessment and ongoing summative assessment throughout the year, such as the need for an adapted layout to encourage talk when communication and language needs more specific focus.

Staff also aim to ensure the children feel they can see themselves within the space. Therefore, parents are invited to provide family photographs to include within the home corner, children's photographs are used to make mini-me characters to play with and displays include all children and their learning. Also, the setting is resourced with diverse and inclusive resources to encourage exploratory play-based learning and is respectfully based in contexts familiar to the children. (E.g. foods and dolls within the home corner and small world play, characters within books and images within teaching resources.)

Teaching in the EYFS at Abbeys:

At Abbeys, teachers have high expectations of children both in terms of their progress and behaviour. This behaviour expectation aligns with the school's Positive Ethos and Behaviour policy and is modelled by all adults within the school. The first half term is focused heavily upon the Personal, Social and Emotional area of development to support children with building relationships with each other and staff, as well as provide tools for understanding and regulating emotions and learning the golden rules and routines of the school day.

Early Years teaching will be interspersed within a balance of adult-led and play based child-initiated activities across the day, with inputs increasing in length as the year progresses. Children will have core adult led input sessions for Phonics, Maths and other curriculum area learning each day as well as opportunities for songs and stories to be shared daily. This will be guided by the use of Read, Write Inc for Phonics and Mastering Number/ White Rose for Maths, as well as IAACW/Drawing Club. While children engage in 'choosing time,' adults plan a selection of weekly Green Learner Challenges, which encourage the children to explore different learning areas and extend their learning experiences.

Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting within the continuous provision, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. Staff follow the SHREC approach to dialogue, supporting children through modelled language and interest rather than a string of questions. The adult's role is to continually observe and accompany – deciding when to model, demonstrate and discuss what the child is doing and when to let the child take the lead. In some cases, where appropriate, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a set task or activity with them; at other times they will participate in a child's play, extending and supplementing it as appropriate.

Children will benefit from the expertise and knowledge of a range of adults in the setting. Including specific curriculum leaders such as sports coaches, HLTAs with training in mental health/well-being and Forest school leaders.

Inclusion in the EYFS at Abbeys:

All children at Abbeys receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and teaching inputs/adult-led activities will be adapted according to needs and learning styles. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need or barrier to access learning, intervention programmes will be implemented as well as the use of The Hive smaller group learning space. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and in liaison with the school's Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and Inclusion Policy.

This will be implemented through:

- A possible phased transition programme (dependant on a child's specific SEN needs.)
- Completion of appropriate documents, such as the First Assessment and Communication Tool (FACT)
- Working collaboratively with families or carers, the SENCo and other professionals such as School nursing, Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Parent Support Advisor.
- Providing provision based on specific targets detailed in Individual Support Plans (ISP) Reviewing these and setting new targets throughout the year.

- Following external therapy or support programmes of work, such as Speech and Language or Occupational therapy.
- Using communication aids, such as Widgeo symbols as visuals carried by adults, as well as communication boards throughout the provision and within teaching resources.

Children who join the school as multilingual learners will be assessed using the FSEAL EYFS documents to identify their level of confidence in understanding, speaking, reading and writing in English. Further intervention support, including pre-teaching of relevant vocabulary will be offered weekly where appropriate. Children's home languages will be valued and celebrated within the classroom, supporting all learners to expand their knowledge of the wider world through greetings, songs and resource selection.

Assessment in the EYFS at Abbeys:

During the children's first half term (6 weeks), our staff assess each child's development and current learning attainment against the criteria set out in Development Matters using the Government Baseline Assessment. This baseline assessment is a short, interactive and practical assessment of each child's early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills when they begin school and is shared with the government via an online platform. If a child joins mid-year from another country or another school and did not take part in the Government Baseline Assessment, then we assess them against this within 6 weeks of starting with us.

We also use this time for the staff to further discover the unique personality and interests of each child so that their individuality can be celebrated and incorporated into the setting provision set up and for adults to model examples of collaborative play using the resources in the setting.

Following this, we make regular informal assessments of children's learning in the form of observations, examples of child-initiated work and samples of dated work from Independent Maths and IAACW/Drawing Club books and photographs. We use a mixture of Tapestry and displays for the recording of learning experiences, as well as Sonar Tracker (online assessment tool used by the whole school) for formative assessment against the Development Matters statements and eventually the end of year goals. Staff then use this information to ensure future planning reflects individual and group needs. Once a term, summative assessments are entered onto Sonar to track where children are in their development. These records are passed onto and discussed with Year One teachers to ensure a smooth transition.

Assessments are also carried out half termly (or more frequently if appropriate) in Read Write Inc using the online assessment tool. This is used to inform adults of suitable grouping for Phonics teaching sessions as well as when interventions are needed; speed minutes, Pinny time for sound awareness or blending or 1:1 tuition.

We have regular parents' meetings which take place to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's progress and next steps in learning [Autumn/ Spring term] and we have annual reports to parents in July [Summer term.]

Positive Relationships in the EYFS at Abbeys:

We recognise the importance of working alongside parents and other significant adults during a child's education.

We achieve this by:

- Providing a starting at Abbeys Primary information guide to parents/carers.
- Visiting preschool settings, where possible, to meet and discuss the children with their current familiar adults.
- Offering home visits for 2 members of the EYFS staff team to meet with parents/carers and their children in an environment they feel most comfortable.
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend several 'stay and play' sessions with us before starting school.
- Providing formal meetings for parents during the school year to discuss children's progress.
- Welcoming parents throughout the year to discuss any concerns with the teacher and/or teaching assistants as necessary.
- Working to build good relationships with families to promote a regular two-way flow of information – using the online system Tapestry.
- Sending out surveys to parents for feedback on provision.
- Inviting parents in to information sessions about how we deliver teaching in Read Write Inc phonics.
- Having transition meetings with Year 1/2 teachers to help them learn about their new classes.

Health & Safety/Safeguarding in the EYFS at Abbeys:

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 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance and adhere to the school's safeguarding policy, using CPOMs to record any concerns. All staff working within the setting have relevant DBS checks and are trained in our school's safeguarding procedures.

We use medical tracker to record any first aid or medication administration, which is carried out by Paediatric First Aid trained staff. Staff update this training or carry out further training as required.

Each day, safety checks are carried out and noted for the indoor and outdoor learning space used by the staff and children. Adaptations are made to provision, particularly outdoors, depending on the weather conditions present.

We are a healthy, allergy aware school. Staff are trained in allergy and anaphylaxis for schools. We cater (where reasonably possible) for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place, ensuring that all children receive the correct meal. We participate in the free fruit and milk government scheme. Children access a fruit/vegetable snack in a shared class snack time each morning which is supervised by first aiders. Children also have access to drinks from their water bottles or cups/jug of water in the classroom with reminders to keep hydrated throughout the day. For our Reception

children, we offer the universal infant free school meal at lunch time and the menu is regularly monitored and updated with the on-site chef. Children are offered milk or water to drink alongside their lunch.

Safer Sleeping in the EYFS at Abbeys:

In line with the updated EYFS Framework guidance around safer sleeping, although naps are not part of normal routine, safe sleep procedures will be followed if children fall asleep in class for any reason:

- Where possible, sleep will take place within a quiet, safe space with the child sleeping on their back on an appropriate firm, flat sleep mat. If a child falls asleep elsewhere, staff will safely transfer the child, where possible.
- Hazards, obstructions, loose items, soft toys, and overheating risks will be removed.
- Children will be supervised by adults and checks recorded at 10-minute intervals (Time child fell asleep, times of checks and observations noted, time child woke up)
- The temperature of the room (ideally 16–22°C) and consideration of the temperature of the child will be monitored and staff will adjust clothing or layers to maintain comfort without risk of overheating.
- Parents will be contacted. If a recurring sleep pattern impacts a child's engagement, learning, or development, staff will work with families to identify supportive strategies.
- Staff will be trained in the safer sleeping policy requirements and leaders will monitor implementation.

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if:

- Updated government guidance is released.
- Changes are made to EYFS requirements.
- Concerns or incidents highlight the need for amendments.