



Inspire Learning, Ignite Curiosity

Marlow C of E Infant School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2024

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness"

Genesis 1:26

Rationale

At Marlow Church of England Infant School our curriculum aim is to inspire learning and ignite curiosity, within a welcoming Christian and spiritual community.

This bible verse above underpins our Christian vision. It tells us that every individual is created in God's image and so this leads us to conclude that everyone is precious and valuable. As a result of this we focus on treating everybody with respect and dignity because we acknowledge their God given value and unique identity.

To help us achieve our vision we concentrate on:

- Embracing the uniqueness of everybody and being inclusive of all
- Empowering all to be enthusiastic learners
- Ensuring that every child feels nurtured, supported and safe
- Enriching learning through progressive teaching methods and technology
- Being responsible to and for society
- Being good citizens of the planet
- Embodying a Christian and spiritual community
- Being guided by our values of respect, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, thankfulness and service

As a school we support the rights of children and these rights are encompassed in the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This policy focuses on helping to realise Article 28 *All children have the right to a good quality education*

Intent

Our Curriculum is designed to inspire and excite all children, regardless of their background or prior experiences. We are committed to getting to know our children and take interest in their experiences to ensure the curriculum is most suited to their needs. Our curriculum builds on the characteristics of effective learning to develop curious, enthusiastic and resilient learners.

Our curriculum ensures children leave reception with good social skills, a solid understanding of early mathematical concepts and the ability to read and write words and simple sentences. They are beginning to understand their responsibility to each other and to our planet. They are equipped to enter the Key Stage One curriculum with confidence.

Statutory Requirements

The statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are laid out in the:

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf

It is supported by *Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (2021)*

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web_2_.pdf

The Framework describes the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- **Unique child:**
Recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. These commitments are focused around development; inclusion; safety; health and well-being.
- **Positive Relationships:**
Describes how children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents or a key person. The commitments are focused around respect; partnership with parents; supporting learning; and the role of the key person.
- **Enabling Environment:**
Explains how the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The commitments are focused around observation; assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment and the wider context~ transition, continuity, and multi agencies working.
- **Learning and Development:**
Recognises that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

The Curriculum

The development of learning and the curriculum areas to be covered are defined in *The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. The curriculum at Marlow CE Infant school is based on this document and learning is planned to meet the needs of the children.

Our curriculum is clearly planned and sequential, taking key stepping stones in children's development to ensure children are on track for the next steps in their learning. Exciting stories and enrichment activities enhance the provision.

Staff value the place of high-quality interactions with each and every child to help children to acquire a wide vocabulary and the skills to communicate effectively. They learn to listen sensitively, respond appropriately, act with kindness and respect of others.

There are seven areas of learning and development which are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These three areas are the prime areas:

Communication and Language

We recognise the importance of developing children's language and the impact this can have on their ability across all seven areas of learning. We have a language rich environment in which we extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, non-fiction books, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together. We teach children new vocabulary and then give them the opportunity to embed new words in a range of contexts to ensure the children develop and thrive.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Developing confident, happy, healthy learners is essential for their cognitive development. At Marlow C of E, children are taught to work collaboratively, share, take turns, co-operate with others and manage their emotions. They develop strategies to become independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self image. They will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently.

Physical Development

Children are given opportunities to participate in many different physical activities. Opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, helps children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. The children are provided with opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts.

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four specific areas are:

Literacy

At Marlow C of E we strive to develop a life-long love of reading for our children through regular reading sessions, sharing stories, poems and non-fiction throughout the day and weekly trips to the library. The children develop good comprehension through discussion and careful questioning when sharing texts. The children learn to read words independently through their developing knowledge of systematic phonics and building a bank of common exception words that they can read on sight. In writing, they develop the skills of composition and transcription. A variety of resources are used to allow children to develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. The children develop correct pencil grip, left/right orientation and controlled letter formation.

Mathematics

Practical activities are used to help children achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation in number. Children are taught to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. Practical equipment is used to develop a secure base of knowledge and mathematical vocabulary. Children develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures.

Understanding the World

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. They listen to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

Expressive Arts and Design

Opportunities are provided regularly for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching. Children are encouraged to develop their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts by being exposed to a wide range of good quality artistic and cultural opportunities. At various times during the year children participate in school productions and assemblies.

These areas cannot be delivered in isolation and they are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it.

Curriculum Implementation

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, it is acknowledged that the potential for learning arises in every activity and situation. The EYFS curriculum at Marlow CE Infant School:

- includes activities which provide first hand experiences through play and discussion
- provides opportunities for children to interact with others,
- allows children to move about and explore a wide variety of learning situations.
- provides well-planned areas of provision in the wide range of activities, resources and materials available.
- provides opportunities for sustained activity and continuous provision, as well as spontaneous, self-chosen activities.
- provide children with a well-planned curriculum and sequenced progression across the year to ensure they meet the required level at the end of the year

The children's learning day within Reception is a combination of directed adult led and adult focus teaching and child-initiated learning where children have the opportunity to sustain play over a prolonged period of time. At Marlow C of E Infant school this child-initiated time is referred to as 'play learning' in the EYFS timetable. We provide a good balance between adult focus teaching and child-initiated learning.

- Adult Focus and Adult Led Activities are those which are set up and facilitated by an adult or require direct input from a member of staff.
- Child Initiated Activities are those which the children decide for themselves, this learning is captured through discussions, observations and photographs.

Outside

At Marlow C of E Infant School there is a well-equipped outside learning space which children have access to each day. All weather clothing and footwear is available so children are protected and there are no barriers to learning. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there are a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In this area Reception staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices.

Home Learning

In Reception the children are expected to read with their parent/carer every night and practice their key words. Ideas of additional home learning activities are suggested on Google Classroom. The parents are able to access these from home and can add their own observations of the children's learning at home.

Planning

Curriculum planning focuses on six overarching topics across the year, each of which offers experiences in

all seven areas. Where possible, the topics are based on the children's interests and the children are involved where relevant in deciding what they will learn about.

Planning within Reception occurs at three levels:

- Long Term Planning:
 - Curriculum Overview including topics, enrichment opportunities
 - Coverage of seven area of learning
 - Links to school values, RRS, Eco schools
- Medium Term Planning:
 - Breakdown of activities with learning objectives
 - Links to Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage
- Short Term Planning:
 - Individual lesson plans highlight key objective to be taught, adult focused activities and key children to be observed

Differentiation

The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the individual children and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals.

Differentiation is planned for so that pupil's interest is maintained and to ensure that all pupils are challenged and achieve success.

Special Educational Needs

The 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 and outside agencies. This is done in line with the school's assessment policy and SEN policy. Children at risk of falling behind are identified and monitored following analysis of progress data and discussion during progress meetings. Initial interventions are put in place and carried out by members of staff within the Early Years team. Careful attention is given to meeting the needs of SEN children at the planning stage. This can be assisted if the following is taken into account:

- Tailored planning for specific needs
- The importance of relating activities to the pupils' own experiences;
- Emphasis on learning through the visual, aural and tactile, and expression of that learning through non-verbal and creative media;
- The use of practical activities and learning through first hand experiences
- To allow opportunities for response and reflection and the use of self evaluation and assessment
- Extension activities to enable those with particular skills to develop them

Observation and Assessment

As each child enters their Reception year teachers assess the level the children are working at across the EYFS 17 areas of learning against the school's tracking document. Within 6 weeks of the child starting they will be given a 'start of year' assessment, this coincides with the Governments Baseline Assessment. Throughout the year and as part of daily practice children's development and learning is observed and assessed. Children's progress is closely observed over the year and monitored by the whole EYFS team.

At the end of the year, teachers use assessments as well as their own professional judgement of each child to assess the children against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are emerging or expected.

Within the final term an annual report of each child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of learning is written and sent to parents/carers.

Progress is tracked on a termly basis to monitor the development of each child. Areas for development are identified and included in future planning.

Admissions and class groupings

All children are admitted into the Reception Year in accordance with the requirements of the school's Admissions policy. Parents are given the opportunity for their child to attend part time, if their child is not of statutory school age, until it is felt they are ready for full time provision, it is worth bearing in mind that learning may be missed. Children are organised into two class groups of 30 but they spend the majority of their learning time mixing with children from both classes or in small groups for focused activities.

Working with parents

- All parents are invited to attend the new parent information evening which takes place in the summer term before the children start.
- All children and parents are invited to attend pre-school afternoon transition sessions.
- The Reception team arrange optional teacher/ parent/child meets at the start of the school year
- Parents are invited to attend curriculum evening in each term.
- The Reception team hold several parent information sessions throughout the year that parents are invited to.
- The school operates an open-door policy and staff are available to meet with parents where necessary
- Parents are welcomed into school as parent helpers following a training session
- Parents often accompany children on school trips to both the local area and further afield

- Parents are invited to attend parent consultation in the autumn and spring terms and reports to parents are sent out at the end of the summer term.

Health and Safety

Safety is a key component within our environment. It is important to make each child feel comfortable and safe and children are supervised at all times. The careful planning of activities ensures that practical care is always given. All the facilities needed for the care of the children are contained within the Reception area. The number of members of staff holding Paediatric first aid meets the statutory requirements. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Risk assessments are undertaken before school activities take place. The children and staff report any hazards to the head teacher. A full Health and Safety Policy is available in school.

Snack times

At snack time children enjoy a drink of water and a piece of fruit or vegetable together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's language skills and to encourage interaction and conversation as they enjoy a story together.

Equal Opportunities

Please refer to the school's Equalities policy.

Staff development and training

Staff training and development is provided in the following ways:

- School based INSET led by Reception Lead/other members of staff and other agencies
- Liaison with appropriate county and national services;
- Working alongside other teachers or visiting other classrooms as an observer to share good practice
- Attendance of Reception Leader and teacher at County moderation training
- Internal moderation and sharing of practice with local schools
- Training for teaching assistants: phonics, observation strategies, behaviour management, SEN
- Annual appraisals are held for each member of the team and are developmental in nature. Identification of training needs is part of this process and allows each member of the team to grow professionally for the benefit of the children's education and themselves.

Role of Governors

Governors determine, support, monitor and review school policies. They support the use of appropriate teaching strategies by allocating resources effectively. They ensure that building and equipment are safe. They monitor pupil attainment across the school and ensure that staff development and performance management promote good quality teaching.

The role of the Reception Leader

The role of the Reception leader is to:

- Take the lead in development of the Reception team and curriculum provision
- Liaise with SLT and represent the views of the Reception team
- Lead team meetings and the development of the Reception team
- Support parents and provide guidance and information where required
- Report to SLT and County on the attainment of pupils
- Keep up to date with developments in early years education and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate

Monitoring and Evaluation of the EYFS Policy

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored during the year through:

- Monitoring of teaching and learning by SLT
- Consultation with staff.
- Sampling of pupils work and target setting across year groups
- Governors to monitor through discussions with co-ordinator and focus visits

The following criteria can be used as a measure of success

- Are all staff aware of the policy?
- Are children making at least expected progress over the year?
- Is the curriculum stimulating, challenging and inspiring?
- Are the children making a good level of development by the end of the year?

Policy reviewed: October 2024

Date of next review: October 2026