



**PRESTON & WINGHAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS FEDERATION**

# **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

## **APPROVAL & ADOPTION**

This policy was formally agreed and adopted by the Governing Body on:

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013

**Chair of Governors**

Signed: 

## **UPDATE SCHEDULE**

Version	Date	Reason for Update
1		Existing policies of both schools reviewed as part of Federation review process.

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## **1. Introduction**

The Preston and Wingham Primary Schools Federation believes that the experiences and learning opportunities we offer our children right from the start will provide the foundation on which they will build for the rest of their lives. It is therefore our aim to provide a caring and stimulating environment, where every child feels empowered to develop as an independent learner. We ensure that learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Emphasis will primarily be upon providing opportunities that utilise children's experiences and interests and to ensure that all children reach their true potential in every aspect of their development.

Children come into school with a wide and diverse range of personal life experiences. These will have been learnt from their families and as such a wide range of skills and interests will already exist. The contributions of parents and carers are therefore valued and respected and recognised throughout the child's time at school.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Preston and Wingham Primary Schools. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

## **2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the EYFS settings at Preston and Wingham Primary Schools we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life in order to enable them to develop their full potential. 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 by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching children to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- 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 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.

### **3. The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework**

Teaching in the EYFS settings at Preston and Wingham Primary Schools is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates'.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

Educational programmes delivered in the setting also involve activities and experiences from one of the following seven areas. These are:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding of the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum, which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value. The Preston and Wingham Primary Schools Federation believes that Early Years education is important in its own right and

should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

#### **4. Active Learning through Play**

The Preston and Wingham Primary Schools Federation believes children learn best through real experiences and active learning. We know Children learn at their highest level when at play and where children have high levels of well-being and involvement; therefore, we do not make a distinction between play and work. We provide a daily routine for the children, which provides for Teacher Directed, Teacher Initiated and Child Initiated learning opportunities. We support children's learning throughout the Child Initiated and planned play activities and in doing so we ensure children have opportunities to engage and thrive in all aspects and areas of learning.

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play-based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

#### **5. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Preston and Wingham Primary Schools. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs in order to inform practitioners plan for 'Next Steps' in learning.

Evidence of 'new learning' is then recorded in each child's individual 'Learning Journey'.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different learning contexts, including both adult directed activities and child-initiated play. All practitioners in the classroom are involved in observing children.

Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. Observations inform them of children's abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Relevant learning opportunities are then planned as a result of the observations made, in order to help the children make the next steps.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journeys.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

Children's attainment levels are monitored and recorded throughout the year and updated on SIMS to track individual progress. Judgments are made against age-related levels as outlined in the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. 'Best Fit' judgments are made as to whether a child is 'Entering', 'Developing' or 'Secure' in each area of 'Learning and Development.'

At the end of the year an EYFS Profile is completed for each child that consists of an assessment of their progress against the 17 ELG descriptors, together with a short narrative describing the child's three learning characteristics.

For each ELG, children are judged as to whether a child is meeting the level of development expected at the end of the Reception Year (expected), exceeding this level (exceeding), or not yet reaching this level (emerging).

## **6. Planning**

The Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage provides a long-term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. The schools operate a rolling programme of topics. A new topic is covered each term and the children's interests largely drive the content of this topic.

Medium-term planning is created with all early years practitioners involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs. All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult-directed and child-initiated activities indoors and outdoors.

## **7. Parents as Partners**

The Preston and Wingham Primary Schools Federation recognises the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through parent consultations, informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, Stay and Play session and Wow Stars (at Preston Primary School)/Learning Tree Leaves (at Wingham Primary School), practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual. This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular newsletters, reading records, informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day and 3 formal Parent Consultations each year in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. A written report is also completed for each child in the Summer Term.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

## **8. Induction and Transition**

We recognise that starting school can be a stressful time for both the child and the parent. To support the smooth transition into the Reception Class we plan to meet the needs of each child and their family through an induction programme to enable a happy entry into the school and to ensure well - being.

The Preston and Wingham Primary Schools Federation provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of induction visits during the Summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting. They also get the opportunity to meet the other children they will be coming to school with. The class teacher also visits the children in their current pre-school settings. The aim of these visits is to help practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Primary School as smooth as possible.

In the Summer term, parents are invited into school for a 'New Parents Evening' where they can gather information regarding the induction process and find out about what goes on in the setting. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. At this meeting, parents are also given the opportunity to sign up for an individual interview with the class teacher to discuss their child's interests and needs more specifically.

It is important that children feel safe, confident and secure within school. To this end children need to know which adults to turn to in school to seek guidance and support. The school aims to always provide more than one adult for children to approach to take account of their differing personalities and preferences. In order for the school to support children to maximum effect it is also vital that school and parents work in partnership. Therefore, we feel it is important that there are regular opportunities for discussions between school and parents. Although the class teacher is the designated key person for all reception class children, and will be responsible for formally meeting with parents e.g. at parents evening, we feel it is also important to recognise that the teaching assistant dedicated to the reception class plays just as important a role in developing relationships with the children and parents too. By fostering the key person approach we feel that the child and parents will always have a familiar and trusted person around who knows the child well.

## **9. Equal Opportunities**

All practitioners at Preston and Wingham Primary Schools have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Preston and Wingham Primary School.

*See Single Equality Scheme for more information.*