Ivy Chimneys

Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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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.

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*

Intent

At Ivy Chimneys Primary school, we believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is crucial in securing the essential building blocks that children need to make a great and purposeful start to their school career. It is our intent, that children who start in reception at Ivy Chimneys develop cognitively, verbally, physically and emotionally, whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and learning and become independent citizens. We believe that it is important that all children are valued as individuals and we are passionate about helping children achieve their full, unique potential. We believe that all children deserve an education rich in wonder and memorable experiences that allow children's natural creativity and curiosity to flourish; alongside the purposeful acquisition of knowledge and skills.

Implementation

Statutory framework of the EYFS

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and different rates**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balance curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas using play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and carers
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors

Play in the EYFS

At Ivy Chimneys Primary school, children are at the centre of what we do and we believe that children learn best when they are inquisitive, interested and engaged. Learning through play is one of the key principles of Early Years education, which is supported by a wealth of research. Play gives children the opportunity to explore their own interests, enquire, plan and take risks. It is in play that children can concentrate deeply, sustain concentration for long periods and communicate effectively with others, and it is in play that we see the highest levels of engagement and involvement from our pupils.

EYFS curriculum

We value, respect and care for all of the children here at Ivy Chimneys Primary School. Each child is unique and brings an irreplaceable value to our classrooms. 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. This enables children to achieve the Early Learning Goals with seven areas of learning and development interconnected and given equal importance.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

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

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) reflects the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals, all of which are equally valued at Ivy Chimneys Primary School. These experiences our children meet through a healthy diet of both adult initiated and adult directed activities, child initiated (during their independent COOL Time, Child Ownership Of Learning time) and a problem solving approach to learning, enables them to develop a number of competences across all areas of learning. The Early Learning Goals are in line with the National Curriculum and provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage.

As the children who enter our reception classes have varied experiences, we aim to prioritise personal, social and emotional development and communication and language in our curriculum, as well as promoting physical development through everyday activities and challenges. Our enabling environment and warm, skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration. We invest time and energy by encouraging the children to aim high, take risks and develop a love of reading, writing and number.

This is delivered through a curriculum which maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking following children's interests and ideas. We value imagination and creativity and seek to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through a vibrant continuous indoor and outdoor provision, alongside trips, visits and Muddy Mondays/ Welly Wednesdays forest sessions.

We teach a wide range of foundation subjects across the EYFS, both through planning in the moment and in some discrete lessons. Scientific investigations and curiosity are firmly embedded in the EYFS at Ivy Chimneys through the children's exploration of the outdoor area, both in the school environment and during our forest sessions (Muddy Mondays/ Welly Wednesdays). Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, including studying British Values, is incorporated into circle times alongside our PSHCE lessons. We learn about different cultures and places in the world many times throughout the year through different celebrations such as Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali and Eid. We ask the families of our children to share with us the days and celebrations that are special to them so that we can ensure we explore these in class.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. We follow Little Wandle Revised Letters and Sounds, a systematic synthetic phonics teaching programme (SSP) validated by the government, to teach phonics. This includes daily phonics sessions and regular reading practice sessions.

We use Helicopter Stories to promote a love of reading and storytelling in the classroom. These help the children to gain strong oracy skills and confidence and help to guide our long term planning.

The books in each of our EYFS classrooms have been carefully curated to ensure that all children have access to high quality texts. Communication and Language plays an incredible role in all children's learning and we want children to develop a wealth of vocabulary through reading, communication with both peers and adults and music.

At Ivy Chimneys Primary School, we place a high value on early mark making and drawing skills. We explicitly model these skills during our regular Drawing Club sessions, in which we extend vocabulary, share high-quality texts, develop imagination and model drawing and writing techniques.

We follow the Mastering Number programme in Reception which established firm foundations in the development of good number sense. This is supplemented with additional teaching of further areas in maths, such as Shape, Space and Measures. Children have the opportunity to cement their skills by using concrete manipulatives and investigating in their independent COOL Time. We also use 'Word Aware' to ensure that children are confident in their development of mathematical vocabulary.

Teaching and learning in the EYFS

At Ivy Chimneys we follow In the Moment Planning, a model developed by the renowned Early Years practitioner, Anna Ephgrave. This means that rather than adults deciding what the children will be learning ahead of time and working as a whole class or in groups, instead we will engage with the children at activities they have chosen and teach them 'in the

moment'. The cycle of observation, assessment, planning, observation will be carried out on a moment by moment basis. The adult will stand back and observe what the children are doing, assess what they need to do/ know/ learn next and plan their teaching, which will be delivered there and then. It's all about capturing the moment for children to progress, based on what the children are already deeply involved in. From this, we can see the **teachable moment** from the child's perspective and know when to intervene and when to observe. Planning in the Moment allows those crucial moments to be captured and extended there and then rather than introducing the next steps in a week or two. It is child led and real time planning. Children's current interests are identified regularly and teachers and TAs can plan and evaluate from day to day compared to week to week. The EYFS team carry out regular audits of the children's learning environment to ensure learners are getting a range of opportunities to develop in the classroom.

Pupils learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. Whilst we believe in the child-led approach with purposeful interactions to move learning forward, we are very aware of specific skills our children need to develop in order for learning to take place. Therefore we will still have pre-planned carpet learning inputs for Letters and Sounds, Drawing Club and Maths and some circle time and PSHCE lessons. This is to ensure children are exposed to all areas of the EYFS curriculum and are able to then apply these through their own enquiry and exploration. As the year progresses, we may slowly add more pre-planned inputs, particularly towards the end of the year, to prepare the children gently for their transition into Year 1.

Inclusion in the EYFS

We value all our children as individuals, 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 supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We work closely with the parents/ carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together but we have a range of additional intervention and support strategies to enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential or moving on children who are doing very well. This includes, for example, Wellcomm; our communication and language intervention group for children who have been identified as 'not on track' or additional 'keep up' sessions in phonics, through group sessions or 1:1. Children may also take part in 'Talkboost' which helps to develop language skills, alongside confidence building.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial. We have a designated inclusion leader in school who supports us with any additional needs a child may have. In consultation and working collaboratively with parents/ carers, the inclusion leader will lead on provision for children who may experience barriers to their learning. Barriers which may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development in line with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice and the school's SEN/ inclusion policy.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by:

- Setting realistic and challenging expectations. We aim for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. We achieve this by planning for different learning styles, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities or medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds as well as children with diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued
- Using resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping, which all children have equal access to
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support where necessary, within the resources available to the school. This may include a phased transition programme dependent on a child's specific SEN needs
- Providing specific targets detailed in individual's one plan documents and following external therapy or support programmes of work, such as Speech and Language
- Working collaboratively with families or carers, the SENCo and other professionals such as Speech and Language therapists, Educational Psychologists and other services.
- Ensuring a balance across classes within each cohort of gender, ability, children with additional learning or medical needs and summer born children
- Acknowledging the wishes of parents/ carers of twins and multiple birth siblings regarding class allocation in the EYFS.

Assessment in the EYFS

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans, quite often 'in the moment' using our Planning in the Moment approach. We record our observations in a variety of ways and everyone in class contributes.

Observations of children's achievements, their 'wow!' moments', are collated in their personal, online Tapestry Learning Journal. Parents/ carers receive a notification when an observation has been added to their child's learning journal and they can then view this observation and any related photographs/ videos and assessments. Parents/ carers are encouraged to add their own comments and upload their observations to show us what their children are able to do at home. Children's next steps in learning are added to observations when appropriate so that parents/ carers know how to support their children with their learning at home.

Observations are also collected on individual's 'focus child' sheets. Each week we choose a percentage of the class to be 'focus children' with every child having the opportunity to be a focus child three times a year (once a term). Observations of the children are collected on our focus child proforma sheet and parents are then invited into class the following week to

discuss their child's progress and any next steps in their learning. This is alongside twice yearly learning conferences.

Formative assessment in the EYFS is continuous and takes the form of observations, examples of child-initiated work and samples of work from books and photographs. Any work on paper is kept in each child's 'All About Me' learning journey book, which is sent home each week to share with parents/ carers.

We complete termly assessments where we decide if each child is on track or not on track to meet the Early Learning Goals at the end of the reception year, using our knowledge of Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals. At the end of the year the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements, including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher who uses exemplification documents and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement. Children are assessed as having met the expected level or not yet meeting the expected level. This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help schools benchmark and identify improvement.

Working with parents/ carers and other signification adults, i.e. childminders

We recognise the central importance of parents/ carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/ carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's education. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate with confidence in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Meeting with parents/ carers in the summer term before their child starts school at our 'new parents meeting'
- Hosting 'Stay and Play' sessions in the summer term before starting school with children and their parents/ carers
- Inviting parents/ carers to our summer term 'open evening' where they can visit the classrooms and look at work from the previous cohort
- Carrying out home visits in the first few weeks of September where we discuss their child's interests and needs as well as giving parents/ carers a personalised induction
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door policy for parents/ carers to voice concerns or ask questions
- Inviting parents/ carers to a learning conference in the autumn and spring term to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning
- Sending out focus child sheets three times a year which ask parents/ carers to detail any significant events in their child's life at that time and inviting them to ask questions about their child's progress/ wellbeing
- Inviting parents/ carers in for focus child meetings, the week after their child's focus week, to discuss the observations of learning that we have collected and to discuss their progress
- Inviting parents/ carers to contribute to learning journeys, both through Tapestry and the All About Me books
- Engaging all parents/ carers on Class Dojo where announcements and bulletins are regularly sent out and parents/ carers are able to message the class teacher directly

- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books
- Frequently sending out information and videos or presentations about how to best support their child's learning at home
- Sending out weekly phonics sheets, furthering the children's learning at home
- Inviting parents/ carers into school to see how we teach reading and writing at Ivy Chimneys
- Providing parents/ carers with an end of year summary report detailing their child's achievements and EYFS profile
- Inviting parents/ carers to accompany their children on trips and our Muddy Mondays/ Welly Wednesdays forest sessions
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Invitations to join class sessions, for example class assemblies, parent to school day, Sports Day and Friends of Ivy Chimneys events.
- Welcoming parents/ carers as volunteers into our school

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. EYFS class teachers visit many nurseries before children start school and children are invited to an introductory session with their parents/ carers in the summer term before they start school.

Class teachers, alongside an LSA, carry out home visits in the first few weeks of the autumn term. This is a valuable time to talk with parents/ carers on a one to one basis and to answer any concerns/ queries that they might have. Class teachers also take this time to talk through any relevant paperwork and give important information about the curriculum, a typical day and the settling in process.

Children have a carefully staggered transition to school, starting with the summer born children. The children are invited to first spend the morning at school, staying for lunch on the following day and attending full time by the third day. Spring born children start this process on the second day of the summer born transition and autumn born children start their process the day after that. This is to ensure that all children have a safe and secure transition to school with priority given to the youngest summer born pupils, who typically need a little more support transitioning to school. This process may be adapted for pupils with additional needs.

Class teachers regularly meet with KS1 staff to discuss the progress of pupils in EYFS. Towards the end of the year, our class teachers meet with the KS1 teachers to liaise with them and discuss the individual children moving up to their class and their specific needs. EYFS teachers also work alongside KS1 staff to allocate the children into three balanced classes of Year 1 and 2 pupils. Children's assessment data and writing books are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are immediately able to plan for their next steps in learning. Children spend a number of sessions towards the end of the school year in their new Year 1 class to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher. The KS1 teachers regularly visit the EYFS classes over the course of the year so that they become a familiar face to the children.

The environment and resources in the EYFS

A rich and varied 'enabling' environment is actively planned for and continuously developed with various multicultural and inclusive resources to encourage exploratory play-based learning and challenge. Ivy Chimneys Primary School provides a safe, stimulating outdoor learning environment in order to enhance teaching and learning in engaging, problem solving, investigative and explorative ways. Children have daily opportunities to access the outdoor environment which also enables them to increase their levels of physical activity. Children also have the opportunity for a weekly adult directed physical development activity and have the chance to access the forest Muddy Mondays/ Welly Wednesdays setting, situated in Epping Forest, on the doorstep of the school.

Children's learning is enabled within the outdoor learning environment which is seen as an extension of the classroom. Outdoors, children are encouraged to use and apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills through different learning opportunities that also engage all pupils in a positive way with their local, natural surroundings.

Safety, including safeguarding and welfare requirements

At Ivy Chimneys Primary School, we meet the welfare requirements laid down in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021). We actively safeguard and promote the welfare of all of our children. We recognise that children will learn most effectively when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults who care for them. We aim to provide a setting that encompasses a safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence, that helps them to achieve their fullest potential.

Reflection in the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. We use audits to reflect on our practice. This enables us to keep improving our practice and keep asking questions. Ivy Chimneys is a member of Epping Forest Schools Partnership Trust and we actively take part in their EYFS network meetings.

At school, the EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Reception team, as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the EYFS team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance targets. The EYFS team also meet regularly to discuss any training needs, changes in the curriculum or to complete audits together, reflecting on current practice and identifying next steps for development as a phase.

Impact

With the successful implementation of both an enriched, rounded and balanced curriculum and a well-structured, safe, active and challenging learning environment, both indoors and outdoors; children will be able to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that enables them to be successful learners.

- The majority of children in Reception reach the ELG by the end of Summer
- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning which helps them through the rest of school
- Children develop the ability to manage risks
- Children enjoy being independent in managing themselves and their learning
- 100% of parents are happy with their child's progress
- Parents feel part of the school community
- Practice is improved year on year
- Everyone is included
- Children have high levels of wellbeing and involvement