

# The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth

## Achieving Together for a Brighter Future



# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE A STATEMENT OF POLICY

Approved by	LH
Portfolio	EYFS
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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

## Rationale

At The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth we believe that learning in the early years should be primarily first hand, experiential and active. Our Federation Mission Statement states that the moral purpose of our schools is to educate children in an atmosphere of Christian love where all achieve the very best they can, now and throughout their lives.

We will give young children opportunities and space to explore and discover in a secure environment. We recognise that although all children follow sequential patterns of development every child is unique, having their own competencies which need to be brought out and built upon. Young children's learning should be embedded in what is familiar involving play as an essential and rich part of the learning process. Learning should always be a pleasurable and rewarding experience; taking place in a social context. We encourage children's independence and autonomy with them taking responsibility for their learning as much as possible in an atmosphere of security and self-discipline.

## Aims and Objectives for the Foundation Stage

We aim to:

- Provide a caring and secure environment, where each child is valued as an individual.
- Provide equal opportunities for all children, incorporating different cultures, religions and special needs
- Develop every child's confidence and self-esteem to help them become caring and social individuals.
- Provide a flexible and stimulating curriculum across the seven areas of learning.
- Plan challenging learning experiences that have been informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide a range of opportunities that are both adult and child initiated within the classroom and outdoor classroom environment.
- Provide secure and safe learning environments indoors and out.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.

## Foundation Stage Curriculum

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape and guide practice within our Early Years setting. These are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

We also ensure that children have experience and begin to develop their understanding of our Federation Christian Values (RaDaR) – Respect, Determination and Relationships. This will provide children with the foundations on which to build their future understanding of these essential values for life.

## A Unique Child

At The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth 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 and at varying rates. Therefore we offer a curriculum that supports and develops every child as an individual through inclusive practice in a safe environment, with the child's interests at the core of all learning.

## Inclusion

All children and their families are valued and treated fairly at The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth regardless of race, gender, religion or ability. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed

with parents at an early stage and either the setting's or the federation's Inclusion Manager will be called upon for further information and advice, depending on whether the child is in one of our settings or one of our Reception classes.

## **Positive Relationships**

At The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We always aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners and the Wider Community**

At The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth we recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contributions and support that they give their child and us. This process is developed and strengthened by:

- Our Open Days where prospective parents are given the opportunity to gain a feel for how our Foundation Stage function in a normal school day.
- Induction Meetings/ Play and Stay days where our aims are presented to, and discussed with, the parents.
- Our Induction Process, offering children the opportunity to spend time in the Foundation Stage; either the setting or reception class before starting with us.
- Offering one to one interviews (and/or home visits when starting school) as part of the induction process
- Holding 'Meet and Greet' meetings at the start of the school year.
- Always operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- Offering regular parent events throughout the course of the year.
- Holding some workshops for parents throughout the year, offering support with different areas of the curriculum
- Sharing the children's work with the parents and valuing the on-going contributions to these from parents.

As part of our induction process, our Reception Class staff meet with our local feeder preschools to share information on the pupils coming into our Reception Class.

## **Enabling Environments**

At The Federation of the Church Schools of Shalfleet and Yarmouth we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing, talking to and listening to the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences.

## **The Learning Environment**

The Foundation Stage classrooms and settings are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and creative, etc. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor learning area. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active.

## **Learning and Development**

We plan a relevant, stimulating and challenging curriculum that is based upon our observations and assessments of all the children. By assessing the children's needs and stages across the seven areas of the curriculum we allow them opportunity to achieve and exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of their time in the EYFS.

All seven areas of learning and development, in combination with the Characteristics of an Effective Learner, are important and inter-connected.

Three areas (Prime Areas) are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The Prime Areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
- Communication and Language.
- Physical Development.

Children are supported through the four Specific Areas through which the three Prime Areas are strengthened and applied.

The Specific Areas are:

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

The way in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and thinking critically.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Foundation Stage Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. The Planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations.

At the end of their foundation year in school the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Their development is also tracked at regular intervals throughout their first year at school.

### **Admissions**

Children are admitted to school or pre-school following the procedures outlined in our relevant Admissions Policy

Some children find full days very tiring, we do have the flexibility to offer a more staggered entry into school to suit a child's individual needs if either the parent, or Headteacher, feels that is more appropriate.