



Great Horwood Church of England School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

July 2021



This policy was adopted on: 13th July 2021

Date of next review: July 2024

Signed: 

Sarah Biswell Chair of Governors



Our Vision

“Where our children play, learn and grow together” knowing that Jesus said: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” John 15:5

At Great Horwood Church of England School, the academic, emotional and spiritual well-being of all individuals are at the heart of all that we do; where every child and adult is valued. We are a safe, welcoming school within the heart of the village community that aims to provide all our children and adults with the learning opportunities to flourish, be healthy, grow in resilience and realise their full potential; being fully equipped and prepared for a successful future.

Inspired by Christian faith and rooted in the teachings, values and spirituality of the Church of England we embrace our core values of love, perseverance and respect where all individuals can learn to value themselves and others.

We are committed to setting high standards of achievement within a caring and nurturing learning environment. We aim to provide opportunities for children to develop a curiosity of learning, a thirst for knowledge through play, and an exploration of the world around them.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy- March 2021.

Through a positive nurturing environment, we provide the opportunity for every child to reach their full potential. We embrace Christian values and ensure all children are ready for their unique next steps.

Routed in our schools’ vision “*Where our children play, learn and grow together*” knowing that Jesus said: “*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*” (John 15:5) and in line with Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage (2021) we believe:

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

We ensure this is implemented through the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

- 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 and/or carers; and
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Curriculum

At Great Horwood School, our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Document.

The EYFS Framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and included in the delivered curriculum and provision. There are three prime areas, which are seen to underpin the fundamental skills children require. These prime areas also support the development of the specific areas of the curriculum.

The Prime areas include:

Communication and Language- Listening and attention, understanding and speaking.

Physical Development- Moving and handling and health and self-care.

Personal, Social, Emotional Development- Making relationships, managing feelings and behaviour and self-confidence and awareness.

The Specific areas include:

Literacy- Reading and writing.

Mathematics- Numbers and shape, space and measure.

Understanding the World- People and communities, the past and the natural world.

Expressive Arts and Design- Exploring and using media and materials and being imaginative.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also included the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are regularly assessed through observations and planned for throughout Nursery and Reception where staff are continuously promoting the development of these skills.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning include:

Playing and exploring- Children investigate and experience things/events around them and 'have a go'.

Active Learning- Children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.

Creating and Thinking Critically- Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between different experiences and develop strategies for choosing their own ways to do things.

Our curriculum and provision here at Great Horwood aims to spark curiosity, enthusiasm and independence in an open-ended environment, promoting awe and wonder, enabling each individual child to flourish. We establish this through a mixture of topic led and interest led themes within learning, ensuring this is tailored to each individual child within both Nursery and Reception in order to allow them to thrive and reach their next stages in learning.

SMSC Development

In Early Years at Great Horwood C of E School we promote SMSC into our curriculum and provision in the following ways;

Spiritual Development - Children explore their own religious and spiritual identities as well of those of their class and in their community by participating in Religious Education and a variety of Religious Celebrations throughout the school year, as planned for in our Curriculum Mapping. We ensure festivals celebrated by individuals are celebrated by all of us to ensure that all children feel special and valued in our diverse environment.

Alongside the religious aspect, we provide opportunities for children to show awareness of feelings and emotions expressed by not only themselves, but others and to respect these. Mindfulness is a priority here at Great Horwood School and children know that they can use the reflection areas to pursue this, should they wish to do so.

Moral Development - We encourage children to respond appropriately to the needs and feelings of others and to show considerations and kindness of these. We ensure children are aware of their rights and responsibilities within the provision, and develop the understanding from right and wrong, with the ability to develop appropriate ways to handle these. Children are introduced to the 'Zones of Regulation' and this enables them to reflect on their learning behaviour to ensure it is positive, allowing them to participate in their learning and school community.

Social Development - This is a crucial aspect that we focus on within our Early Years provision in order to develop children's social skills and understanding. We ensure opportunities are created for children to develop positive relationships with peers and adults, and that these are used as a key factor for both play and learning.

Cultural Development - We celebrate each other's cultural identities and encourage children to value their own cultural heritage and develop a positive, personal identity, and to show respect for other people's values and beliefs. Within this, we encourage children to show an interest and participate in and respond positively to the languages, food, music and cultural practices of different diverse communities.

Assessment and Recording

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform their individual next steps. All members of staff within early years, record observations of both adult led and child led learning within their individual learning journey, using the assessment platform, Target Tracker. This enables the practitioners to monitor and assess children's progress as well as being an effective planning tool to ensure that the provision reflects the needs and interests of each individual learner.

Children's progress is reviewed continually against the Early Years Framework and Development Matters bands. Throughout the year, children are tracked both half termly and termly on our school's internal tracker, Target Tracker, to show their progress and development across the seven areas of learning. This information is then discussed in pupil progress meetings where we will evaluate the impact of our practice and reflect on it to ensure every child makes rapid progress. At the end of the Reception year, all children are formally assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) where, for each separate goal, they will be judged as being 'emerging' or 'expected'. This information is communicated to parents and carers and is shared with their following Class Teacher in Year 1.

Parental Partnerships

At Great Horwood, we believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved with what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. We have an open-door policy where parents are able to come and our Early Years team to allow this. Throughout the year, we host a variety of events in which we encourage parents or carers to attend, for example, stay and play sessions, curriculum workshops and 'wow' events that children have taken part in.

Transition

Transitions are of crucial importance for children joining our early years provision as we want to ensure all children feel safe and happy. They 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 individual needs and establish an effective partnership with those involved with the child and other settings. We provide 'stay and play' sessions before their initial start date which initially begin with the parent present, this will then be altered dependent on the child's progress with transition. Alongside this, for Reception children, we also provide transition mornings in July to allow them to familiarise themselves with the environment and their peers before the initial start in September.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding procedures are outlined in our whole school Safeguarding Policy. A copy of this can be found on the school website.