Monks Risborough
Church of England Primary School
'A school family where everyone thrives in every way.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy was reviewed Autumn 2023

The policy is to be reviewed Autumn 2026

Signed ..... Chair of Governors

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the Early Years and a child's experiences between birth and 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.'

- ***Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.***

Our school vision and its values are underpinned by detailed, rigorous and innovative teaching methodologies and we aim:-

- To enable all children to learn and develop their skills to the best of their ability
- To promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy coming to school, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning
- To teach children the essential skills of effective communication
- To teach children the basic skills of Literacy and Maths
- To enable children to be creative and to develop their own thinking
- To teach children about their developing world, including how their environment and society have changed over time
- To help children understand Britain's diverse cultural heritage
- To enable children to be positive citizens in society
- To fulfil all the requirements of the Primary Curriculum and the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education
- To teach children to have an awareness of their own spiritual development, and to understand right from wrong
- To help children understand the importance of our British Values, so that they grow up committed to equal opportunities for all
- To launch our unique approach to Growth Mindset in Reception We teach the children about the qualities needed to be a successful learner using our own Monks Mindset Heroes –Tilly and Timmy Teamwork, Curious Cara, Reflective Roxy, Creative Cody, Independent Ivan and the Power of Yet.
- To support pupils to develop the skills, knowledge and motivation to lead healthy and active lives
- To promote pupils' understanding of sustainability and stewardship of the earth's resources.

Our Christian Values are explicitly linked to the Bible and are:

- Respect
- Perseverance
- Friendship
- Responsibility
- Thankfulness
- Generosity
- Community
- Love

1.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a **preparation** for the next stage but is vitally important in itself. For young children there is no distinction between work and play.

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, 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.

This policy needs to be read alongside other school policies and government guidance including:

- Homework policy
- SEND policy
- Assessment policy
- Admissions policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Curriculum poluc
- The Statutory Framework for the Early Years foundation stage
- Other documents from the Standards and testing Agency.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

In EYFS we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and development 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.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and children's self-esteem through developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them 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 which differ from 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. As a school the vision of our Curriculum is built on children's Cultural Capital.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. Statutory Requirements

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document **'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'.** 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:

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

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

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

The 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 closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum, which allows children to make lots of connections between what they are learning. All areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value. These connections are seen through The Characteristics of Effective Learning

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and are willing to have a go.
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying when they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, are able to make links between ideas and develop a range of strategies for doing things.

4. Active Learning through Play

We organise the day to provide a balance between the following:

- Child initiated Activities - children make choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her outcome for learning.
- Adult Initiated Activities - the EYFS team provide the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning.
- Adult Directed Activities - Children engage in planned activities to meet specific learning outcomes.

At Monks Risborough Primary School 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.

5. Planning

Weekly plans are broken down into Communication, Language and Literacy, Maths and 'Topic' related tasks, which focus on the other areas, as well as Phonics. However, all plans take a cross-curricular approach and the prime and specific areas of development are evident across all planning. The timetable reflects an appropriate balance of child-initiated and adult-focussed time.

We follow Read, Write Inc as our systematic synthetic phonics programme. The children are taught phonics daily using this scheme. Weekly plans are responsive to children's current interests and needs, and are linked to the term's topic through the careful planning of high-quality texts to inspire and engage children. Planning takes a cross-curricular approach. These account for children's changing interests and needs.

The teacher regularly liaises with support staff involving them in planning, preparation and assessment. The EYFS team meets once a week to discuss general EYFS updates, Ofsted requirements, and feedback on courses and planning. As well as these timetabled meetings, informal feedback between the teacher and teaching assistants regularly takes place through informal conversations and annotations on planning.

6. Assessment and Record Keeping through Tapestry

Tapestry builds a very special record of a child's experiences, development and learning journey through their early years and primary education. Using photos, videos and diary entries, a teacher or early years practitioner, along with the child's parents, 'weaves' the story of the child and how they are growing and developing. The Tapestry platform then works seamlessly to enable these memories to be kept as a permanent record of each child's unique journey. All information held in the platform is stored securely, and can be downloaded and shared as required. Parents are able to view online their child's progress and how much fun they're having, whilst also uploading their own comments and media.

The communication between staff and parents that Tapestry enables, helps build a shared understanding of how every child can reach their full potential, from birth to the end of primary school.

The EYFS assessment method is still through the EYFS team' observation of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult-focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). The EYFS team makes

time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. The whole EYFS team is involved in observing children. These are then recorded on Tapestry. The EYFS team uses observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

The Tapestry Online 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.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the 'Early Years Outcomes' government document, which outlines children's development in months. The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is used at the end of the year and it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements and gains the Early Learning Goals. Judgments made on children's development are based on the EYFS team's' evidence of children's behaviour, which has been observed consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

7. Inclusion

The school aims to provide a broad and balanced education for all children so that they achieve as highly as they can in English according to their individual abilities.
Through our Early Years provision we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils with special education needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

7.1 SEN

Through on-going formative and summative assessments, the class teacher identifies children who need support with skills at the earliest possible stage. Within the classroom, the teacher identifies children with difficulties and attempts to address them by differentiated activities and extra support where possible. Where a child has a greater need the class teacher and the SENDCo work closely together to further support the child. Interventions may be carried out by a member of the EYFS team and are tracked and evaluated through the use of provision maps. The school follows the Graduated Approach model and will engage with external professionals to ensure that every child is given the opportunity to achieve. This does include providing additional therapies to support a child's SEND needs.

7.2 More able

More able children are also identified and suitable differentiated learning challenges provided.

7.3 EAL

EAL pupils' needs are identified by the class teacher and addressed both within the class, as far as possible, and through individual and small group support.

8. Equal Opportunities

At Monks Risborough, we are committed to equality of opportunity. All pupils will have equal opportunity to reach their full potential across the Early Years Curriculum regardless of their race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability.

9. Parents as Partners

At Monks Risborough we recognise 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. So, the EYFS team endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents this is effectively done through the use of Tapestry.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. We encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). Initially through the 'Starting School' induction document. This supports the class teacher in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests. We encourage parents to upload experiences the children have at home on the Tapestry app and these can then be shared with the class and are included in their online learning journey. In the Spring and Summer terms the children are set home learning challenges that parents can choose to access. This learning can then be brought in to share with the other children in the class.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, parent notice display areas, topic webs, informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day, formal meetings and the school website.

Suggestions of how parents can support at home: consolidation and building on what has been covered in the setting are provided through information sharing meetings, workshops, weekly learning overviews and via the website.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term where parents find out more about the EYFS curriculum, how it is delivered and what learning looks like in the EYFS. The second evening takes place during the Spring term where the class teacher will give feedback on children's learning and development progress, plus inform parents of next step targets.

Other opportunities for the EYFS team to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include opportunities for parents to come in to school and look at their child's Learning Journey, monthly book looks, Invitations to attend the 'creative outcome' are sent at the end of some terms (e.g. nativity play). At the end of year reports where the children's achievements are recognised.
Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and become a volunteer in the school. Parents are encouraged to share their skills or experiences with the class (e.g. pilot visit), to read with children..

The setting has a friendly, open-door ethos and the EYFS team are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

10. Role of EYFS Leader

The Subject Leader is responsible for raising the standards of teaching and learning in the EYFS through:

- monitoring and evaluating learning through looking at pupil progress, provision of Literacy (including Intervention and Support programmes), the quality of the Learning Environment, the deployment and provision of support staff
- Leading in policy development
- Keeping up to date with recent EYFS developments
- Auditing CPD needs and supporting colleagues in their CPD
- Auditing, purchasing and organising resources
- Ensuring that all subject leaders are aware of the requirements of Early Years and reports to them on current EYFS practice.

11. Role of the Governing Body

Initiatives are discussed with the Education committee and regular meetings take place on the progress of Early Years provision with the Early Years Leader and Early Years Governor. The Governing body ensures the implementation of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and reviews the policy regularly.

12. Involvement of Parents/Carers

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators and we strive to ensure they play an active role in the child's education. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Sharing an overview of the half term's learning objectives with parents so they can support their child's learning, through the Topic web
- Having an 'open door' policy and ensuring many opportunities for the teacher to be available to meet parents and exchange information at the beginning and end of the day
- 'Wow' moments captured at home are shared in school and filed in Learning Journeys
- Inviting parents to come and help in the classroom and share skills they may have with the class
- Questionnaires to parents asking them what workshops/events they would like to best support their child
- Parent workshops to support them in developing key skills
- Open mornings/afternoons in which parents can come in and work with their children
- Each child having their own learning journey which home and school contribute to throughout the year to celebrate children's achievements
- Ensure parents are informed about school events and relevant topics through regular newsletters, letters, notice boards and the school website

13. Admissions and Induction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The Reception children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five and attend school full time.

Before the children start at Monks Risborough in the summer term all of the Reception parents are invited into the school to meet the school team. At this meeting, information regarding the induction process, uniform, lunches and preparing your child for Monks Risborough is shared. There is also time for informal chats and parent questions with appropriate arrangements for Casual Admissions (refer to Casual Admissions guidance from Local Authority)

Before they start Reception in September, all children are offered an opportunity to come and take part in a 'stay and play' session in the summer term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet the EYFS team and start to become familiar with the setting environment. Parents receive the 'My Unique Child' document to complete with information about their child ready for their next meeting in September. The Reception class teacher will also visit as many children as possible in the children's current pre-school settings. The aim of these visits is to support the teacher to develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Monks Risborough Primary School and Nursery as smooth as possible.

In Reception the children have a second stay and play visit in school where the parents spend time with the class teacher sharing information completed over the Summer in the 'My Unique Child' document about their child. This helps to support the EYFS team's knowledge and understanding of each individual child.

At Monks Risborough we do not have a staggered intake as we feel this is detrimental to ensuring children are exposed to all aspects of the Monks Curriculum regardless of their term of birth. Instead we welcome all our Reception children as full time pupils from September.

Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies the EYFS team use to maintain children's positive feelings about starting school.

13.1 Transition from Reception to Year 1

Transition to year one should build upon and extend the experiences children have whilst in Reception.

- Throughout the year there will be theme days where Reception, year one and two mix which will allow children to make friends in other year groups as well as allowing them to visit different classrooms and meet other teachers.
- During the summer term children will regularly make visits to the year one classrooms for short periods of play and story time
- The Reception and Year 1 teacher will meet to discuss the child's achievements in relation to the Early Learning goals.
- Throughout the first half of the autumn term Year One will continue to work off the EYFS framework ensuring similar routines, expectations and activities are adopted enabling children who have not yet achieved the expected level in the EYFS to continue to do so. There will also continue to be periods of active child initiated learning and access to an outdoor learning environment through planned play. The amount of time that children are sat on the carpet still and listening will be gradually increased to ensure that children remain motivated, enthused and eager learners.

The EYFS Leader has overall responsibility to ensure that the process of transition is smooth, effective and a happy process.

14. <u>Policy Review</u>

This policy was written by the Early Years Leader in consultation with staff and will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

Covid Addendum

Due to Covid-19 some of our usual transition activities are unable to happen. Therefore we will follow this addendum until normal circumstances can resume. When the risk from Covid-19 has been reduced this addendum will be removed from the policy.

13. Admission and Induction

- Due to Covid we have created a Virtual Tour of the School that allows all new parents to get to know the school rather than have an onsite tour of the school
- Telephone appointments are available to discuss the school with the Headteacher, a member of SLT and the EYFS class teacher.
- Where possible, we will invite families into the school for play and stay sessions in the summer term this may be done in reduced numbers to ensure we are operating safely. Where parents are unable to attend, a Zoom session will be done instead.
- In the Summer Term we will offer a new parents meeting where the parents get to meet the Headteacher and class teacher and see short presentations about the school and Reception again where possible this will be offered in person but with small groups of parents attending at one time. If it is not possible for parents to attend the school then a Zoom meeting will be held instead.