



Stoke St. Michael
Primary School

Together We Are Proud, Together We Are STOKE

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



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“Play is possibility. If we fail play, we fail childhood; if we fail childhood, we fail ourselves.”

- Greg Bottrill

At Stoke St Michael Primary School and Nursery, part of The Wessex Trust, we are committed to providing our youngest learners with an exceptional foundation for their future education. Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision sits at the heart of our small rural school, offering a nurturing, inclusive and ambitious start for all children.

Our mixed Nursery and Reception class (Goldfinches) is teacher-led and supported by skilled nursery assistants and teaching assistants. This structure ensures seamless transition into school, continuity of care, and an environment where children feel safe, known and valued. Play is central to our pedagogy; through high-quality play, children develop across all Prime and Specific areas of learning and work towards the Early Learning Goals.

This policy outlines our EYFS intent, implementation and impact, and how our curriculum, environment and relationships support children to thrive.

Intent

At Stoke St Michael Primary School, we believe that children flourish when they feel emotionally secure, understood and supported. With small class numbers and strong relationships with families, our provision ensures that each child receives personalised care and high-quality learning experiences.

Many of our children enter EYFS with lower-than-typical starting points, particularly in Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Communication and Language. Therefore, our curriculum prioritises these areas to build strong foundations for future success.

Our EYFS aims to ensure that all children:

- Feel emotionally secure and develop positive, trusting relationships.
- Communicate with confidence, using increasingly rich vocabulary.
- Develop independence, resilience and self-belief.
- Become curious, motivated and engaged learners.
- Make strong progress from their individual starting points.
- Are well prepared- socially, emotionally and academically - for transition into Year 1.

We value children as unique individuals and design a curriculum that is inclusive, ambitious and responsive to their needs and interests.

Principles

Our principles are embedded in the EYFS framework:

A. Unique Child

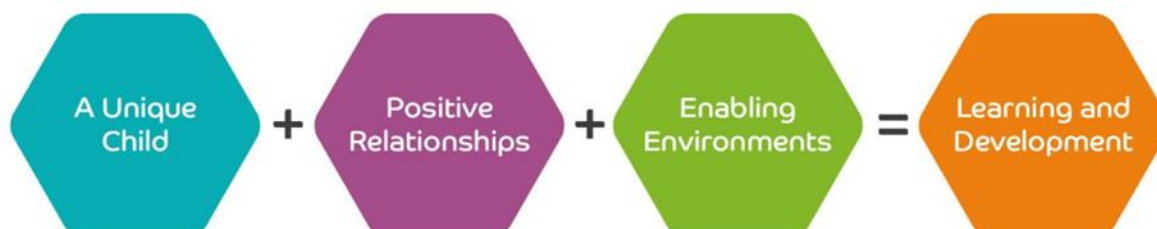
We recognise that every child is capable, resilient and a competent learner. We support children to develop at their own pace, celebrating individual progress

B. Positive Relationships

Warm, respectful and nurturing relationships underpin children's emotional well-being and learning.

C. Enabling Environments

Our environment is carefully planned to promote independence, curiosity and problem solving, with strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.



Characteristics of Effective Learning

We recognise the importance of how children learn, as well as what they learn. The EYFS framework identifies three characteristics of effective learning:

Playing and Exploring

Children learn to be engaged in their environment through playing and exploring. This involves using their senses to explore the world, trying things out, and being willing to 'have a go.' We are committed to offering children an experience that will foster a love of learning within a safe and stimulating environment. We build secure and trusting relationships which allow our children to flourish.

Active Learning

Children become more focused, maintain attention for longer periods, and exhibit resilience when encountering challenges. They derive satisfaction from completing activities and achieving their goals. The indoor and outdoor environment is carefully resourced so that children become motivated to be independent learners. Children are supported to become more resilient: to keep on trying and achieve what they set out to do. Children become more engaged, showing high levels of energy and fascination.

Creating and Thinking Critically

Children develop critical thinking by making connections and noticing patterns in their learning. They plan, test ideas, solve problems, and think about how to approach tasks differently. As children engage in a broad range of activities in Early Years, they begin to actively think about the meaning of what they are doing. Children will begin to generate new ideas, make links between experiences and learning and become problem solvers

Implementation

Curriculum Design

Our curriculum aligns with the EYFS Statutory Framework and is designed around the seven areas of learning. The Prime Areas form the foundation of our provision:

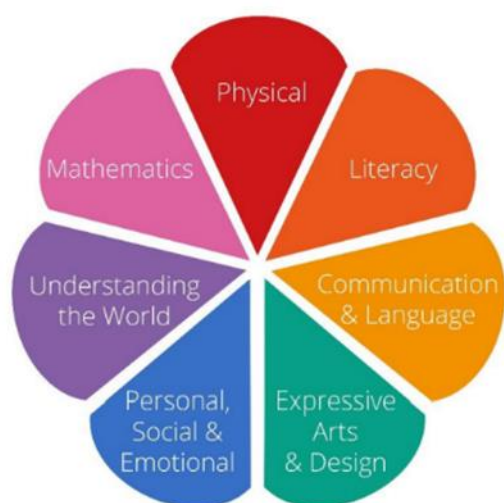
- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development

The Specific Areas—Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design—are taught through meaningful, play-based learning that reflects children’s interests and developmental needs.

Our curriculum is supported by Cornerstones Curriculum Maestro, ensuring progression, coherence and opportunities for child-led exploration. We aim to cultivate not only academic growth but also emotional well-being and social development, ensuring that all children thrive in a supportive and enriching environment.

Learning is carefully sequenced so that:

- Communication and language underpin all interactions and teaching.
- PSED supports emotional regulation, confidence and social development.
- Physical development ensures children can access learning with increasing independence.



Teaching and Learning Approach

We provide a rich balance of:

- Adult-led learning
- Purposeful child-initiated play
- Thoughtfully planned continuous provision

Our staff are highly skilled in:

- Modelling high-quality language
- Sustained shared thinking
- Scaffolding learning through questioning and interaction
- Knowing when to step in and when to step back

Staff draw on up-to-date research and professional development, including:

- Drawing Club (Greg Bottrill) to support early mark making, storytelling, imagination and language
- Karen Wilding's early maths training, supporting deep understanding of number, pattern and problem solving

Early Language, Reading and Mathematics

Our environment is language-rich, with high-quality talk prioritised throughout the day. Core texts from our reading spine act as a golden thread across the curriculum.

Phonics is taught through Read, Write, Inc. (RWI):

- Introduced daily from the summer term in Preschool
- Delivered daily from the start of Reception



Mark Making and Early Writing

Children experience:

- Daily purposeful mark making through Drawing Club
- Access to varied writing tools in the Message Centre
- Experiences that emphasise meaning before form
- We ensure children develop the fine and gross motor skills required to put pen to paper.



Mathematics

Mathematical learning is embedded through:

- Using the White Rose Maths scheme
- The use of Ten Town to embed number sense
- Counting, number recognition and comparison
- Shape, pattern and spatial reasoning
- Use of mathematical language in play and routines
- Access to high quality resources as part of continuous provision



Inclusion and Assessment

All children are valued and supported to succeed.

- WellComm is used on entry to identify speech and language needs early.
- Assessment is ongoing, formative and primarily observational.
- Tapestry is used to record learning, monitor progress and share with parents.
- Planning is responsive to children's needs, interests and next steps.

Where additional needs are identified, staff work alongside parents and external agencies to provide timely and appropriate support.



Partnerships with Parents and Community

We recognise parents/carers as children's first educators. Positive relationships and strong communication ensure consistency and support.

We use:

- Tapestry (learning journeys)
- Class Dojo (communication)
- Parents' evenings
- Stay and Play sessions
- Community links and events



These strengthen home-school partnerships and enrich our provision.

Impact

The impact of our EYFS provision is evident in children who:

- Are happy, secure and confident within school.
- Communicate effectively with increasing vocabulary.
- Make strong progress from often below age-related starting points.
- Show independence, curiosity and resilience.
- Engage positively with learning and with each other.
- Are well prepared socially, emotionally and academically for Year 1.

Children leave EYFS as confident learners who feel a strong sense of belonging within the school community.

Assessment

Assessment in EYFS is continuous and informs planning. It includes:

- Baseline assessments (including WellComm)
- Daily observations
- Tapestry learning journeys
- Termly tracking against developmental pathways
- EYFS Profile at the end of Reception

Assessment is holistic and used to celebrate strengths, identify needs, and ensure strong progress over time.

Inclusion

We are committed to equity and high expectations for all. Children with SEND or additional vulnerability receive:

- Personalised support
- Adaptations to teaching and environment
- Collaboration with external specialists
- Close engagement with families

Our ambition is that every child reaches their full potential.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains current, effective and aligned with statutory requirements. Any changes will be communicated to staff, parents and stakeholders.

Conclusion

Our EYFS provision provides a secure, stimulating and enriching foundation for lifelong learning. By valuing every child, nurturing relationships and providing a high-quality, research-informed curriculum, we ensure all children become confident, capable and curious learners - ready for the next stage of their education.

Goldfinches FS1 & FS2 Long Term Plan

Terms	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Class Projects Cycle A	Me and My Community 	Once Upon a Time 	Starry Night 	Dangerous Dinosaurs 	Sunshine and Sunflowers 	Big Wide World 
	Exploring Autumn 	Sparkle and Shine 	Winter Wonderland 	Puddles and Rainbows 	Shadows and Reflections 	Splash 
Class Projects Cycle B	Let's Explore 	Marvellous Machines 	Long Ago 	Ready Steady Grow 	Animal Safari 	On the Beach 
	Build it Up 	Puppets and Pop Ups 	Stories and Rhymes 	Signs of Spring 	Creep, Crawl and Wriggle 	Move it 

The New Early Years Foundation Stage Framework 2021

Over Arching Principles:

1. A Unique Child 2. Positive Relationships 3. Enabling Environments and Adult Support 4. Learning and Development.

(COETL) Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

1. Playing and Exploring 2. Active Learning 3. Creating and Thinking Critically

Prime Areas

1. Communication and Language	2. Personal and Social Development	3. Physical Development
Listening Attention and Understanding Speaking	Self-Regulation Managing Self Building Relationships	Gross Motor Skills Fine Motor Skills

Specific Areas

4. Literacy	5. Maths	6. Understanding the World	7. Expressive Arts and Design
Comprehension Word Reading Writing	Number Numerical Patterns	Past and Present People, Culture and Communities The Natural World	Creating with Materials Being Imaginative and Expressive