

# Vernon Primary School



## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



*'Nobody else is quite like me'*

Early Years education is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Our aim is to provide a broad, balanced and relevant range of experiences and skills, rooted in play and planned to be worthwhile and of interest and value to our children. These experiences will be developed in a safe, secure and supportive environment. Children will be able to reach their potential socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

There are four overarching principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

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

### **The Unique Child**

At Vernon Primary school every child is valued, and the school is committed to meeting their individual needs in all areas of development. Every child is unique and we believe has the potential to be successful. The Early Years Curriculum is available to all children and every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021).

Where a child presents with Special Educational Needs, the class teacher will work alongside parents, SENCO and external professionals may also be required. Parents are fully involved in this process, centred around each child. We follow the SEND Code of Practice 2014 to ensure 'All children are entitled to achieve the best possible education with high aspirations and expectations'. A Personalised learning plan will be put in place and the teacher will regularly update Parents/Carers on progress and development to allow each child to access the curriculum along with their peers. Early identification is important and therefore, staff working in school monitor the children's progress carefully through regular pupil progress meetings.

During the end of the Summer Term, teachers from EYFS and Year 1 work closely together to ensure that the children's learning experiences in the final year of the EYFS are valued. This enables Year 1 teachers to have a fully holistic picture of individual learning styles, 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' (See **Appendix B**) and attainment. This supports a positive and smooth transition into Key Stage 1.

All staff adhere to the school's Health and Safety Policy. For the Early Years, this includes both inside and outside the classroom: confidentiality requirements, access to classroom and outdoor area, collection of children, medical procedures, appropriate supervision, appropriate storage of tools and materials and teaching children safe use of materials and tools. All staff have relevant training and DBS checks.

At Vernon, we promote a healthy lifestyle as we know this is an integral part of their well-being. Every child in EYFS has a free piece of fruit daily, we encourage drinking water and we encourage a good self-care management of toileting and hand washing.

### **Learning and Development**

We recognise that children develop and learn in a range of different styles and at different rates. Wherever children are in their unique development, this is our starting point for their learning. Before children enter reception, links are established with Parents/Carers and all pre-school settings to gain an understanding of each child's stage of development and support their transition into full-time education.

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Children learn through a holistic approach; they discover connections that develop their understanding. They learn from everything that happens, most effectively through planned purposeful play, first-hand experience and talk. Time and opportunity are provided for the children to develop deep level involvement in activities and to establish relevant links in their learning, both indoor and outdoor. Feeling confident and being encouraged to think for themselves will lead to confidence and independence in learning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is made up of seven *areas of learning* (See **Appendix A**):

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

A Statutory Baseline assessment is carried out during the first weeks of a child starting reception and is used to consider each child's next steps. This is done in a comfortable environment and delivered in a child-friendly manner. This gives us a starting point for planning a unique, high-level curriculum which supports and scaffolds skills, next steps and an awareness of learning styles for children, as well as how to provide for our continuous provision.

At Vernon we value the importance of reading and we feel that the start of reception is a great opportunity to really nurture the love of reading, books and storytelling. We are passionate about exposing the children to a range of text and genres and making each one an adventure. The reading journey at Vernon is filled with discovery, intrigue and the key to unlocking wonderful vocabulary and imagination. We follow the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' phonics programme which is a complete systematic synthetic programme. We encourage Parents/Carers to be fully involved in this journey with their child.

At the end of the school year, a summative report is undertaken in the form of an 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile'. This informs Parents/Carers of their child's attainment in relation to the 17 early learning goals. This summary is also sent to the Local Authority. This report reflects on the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL); this is how the child thinks, is motivated and engaged in their play.

An online learning journal is kept for each child using the platform 'Tapestry', where observations are added by all adults. Parents/Carers can access this for their child and can view, comment on and add their own observations about their child's learning and development.

### **Positive Relationships**

Building relationships between children and adults is of central importance to support children's development. All adults working in our Foundation Stage respect the feelings of children and their families and work closely in partnership to ensure that these sensitive and trusting relationships are as effective as possible, always respecting confidentiality.

Clear and consistent class routines and rules in line with our school behaviour policy encourage high standards of children's behaviour; this enable effective learning and teaching. We promote a positive

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environment and always communicate appropriately to children to discuss and encourage positive behaviours.

Regular informal discussions take place as part of the open-door policy between school and Parents/Carers. Information from Parents/Carers about their child's learning is actively sought and valued and parental involvement in their child's school life is encouraged. Parents' evenings take place in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss children's attainment, wellbeing and next steps.

### **Enabling environments**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2021) has been updated to 'improve outcomes at age 5, particularly in early language and literacy'. Our classroom is continually evolving to support and scaffold the children's learning. We observe, interact, play and engage with pupils and from this, we plan our bespoke curriculum for pupils. Observations of interests and needs are highlighted and are part of enhanced provision. Our curriculum is bespoke and unique to the current cohort; we plan for skills and dispositions to ensure that our children become successful and lifelong learners. We plan for self-regulation and executive functioning, fully engaging children in their play.

At Vernon we know that children learn best when they are happy, fully engaged, observing and having a range of opportunities to rehearse and practice in a safe, secure environment. We believe in a holistic view of learning, so all children can access our environment. We have a strong belief in learning through nature and many of our outdoor resources are natural to provide open-ended imaginative opportunities. We believe in open-ended play where there is no limit to learning. We have weekly welly walks where the children explore the school field and we always conclude by spending quality, purposeful time under a large oak tree to connect with nature. We involve the local community as much as possible to enrich children's experiences and their breadth of learning.

The classroom space is established and organised with the specific provision that we know will support the children's needs; it will allow them space to learn, consolidate and rehearse for all learning styles. We plan for children to demonstrate the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and to strengthen their communication and language. We design opportunities for skills-based work and encourage children to be aware of their skills and how best to improve on them. Our focus on learning is always positive and we encourage children to take responsibility for their learning. We strive for children to thrive in a classroom with rich language for speaking and reading, excellent communication, inclusivity, equality and a fun environment where children feel nurtured and empowered to be unique, successful and with an aspirational vision. Every child has the potential to achieve.

### **Penny Brammar**

Early Years Foundation Stage Leader

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Review Date – November 2025

Ratified by Governors – November 2023

## APPENDIX A

# Seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS

*The **three prime areas** are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.*



Communication and Language



Personal, Social and Emotional Development



Physical Development

*The three prime areas are strengthened and applied through the **four specific areas**.*



Literacy



Mathematics



Understanding the World



Expressive Arts and Design

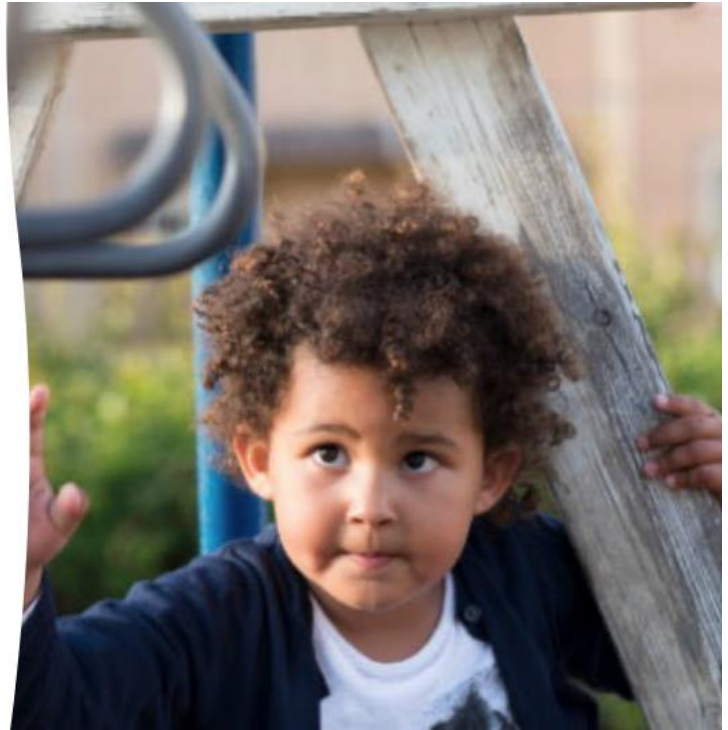
## APPENDIX B

# The three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

[When we see a baby in their cot](#), we're looking at 'the greatest mind that has ever existed, the most powerful learning machine in the universe.'

We can help children become even more powerful learners through three **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**:

- ***playing and exploring*** - I investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- ***active learning*** – I concentrate and keep on trying even when I encounter difficulties. I enjoy achieving.
- ***creating and thinking critically*** – I am learning to develop my own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.



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## Playing and Exploring

- I understand that my actions have an effect on the world, so I want to keep on exploring.
- I am learning to plan and think ahead about how I will explore or play with objects.
- I might talk to myself or use visual aids such as pictures while I am playing to help my thinking. For example, when doing a jigsaw, I might whisper under my breath: "Where does that one go? – I need to find the big horse next."
- I can make independent choices.
- I bring my own interests and fascinations from home into my setting. This helps me to develop my learning.
- I respond to new experiences that you introduce.



## Active Learning

- I join in with routines without needing to be told, like going to my cot when I want to sleep.
- I am learning to predict what might happen because I understand a familiar routine, e.g. I may get my coat when adults open the door to go outside.
- I show goal-directed behaviour, e.g. as a baby I may pull myself up by using the edges of a low table to reach for a toy on top of the table. As a toddler, I might turn a storage box upside down so I can stand on it and reach up for an object.
- I am learning to correct my mistakes myself, e.g. instead of using increasing force to push a puzzle piece into the slot, I try another piece to see if it will fit.
- I keep on trying when things are difficult.



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## Creating and Thinking Critically

- I take part in simple pretend play, e.g. I might use an object like a brush to pretend to brush my hair, or 'drink' from a pretend cup.
- I can sort materials, e.g. at tidy-up time, I know how to put different construction materials in separate baskets.
- I can talk about my learning. I think about my progress as I try to achieve a goal. I check how well I am doing.
- I am learning to solve real problems, e.g. to share nine strawberries between three friends, a strategy I might use is to put one in front of each, then a second, then a third. Finally, I might check at the end that everyone has the same number of strawberries.



## Creating and Thinking Critically

- I like to 'pretend' in my play. By pretending to be someone else I can imagine other points of view, e.g. when I am playing 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff' I might suggest that "Maybe the troll is lonely and hungry? That's why he is fierce."
- As I learn more things, I become more confident to come up with my own ideas and explanations. When I know about different types of dinosaurs, I can say which ones are meat-eaters by seeing if they have big sharp teeth.
- I can concentrate hard to achieve something that's important to me. I can focus my attention and ignore any distractions around me.



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