



# Alban Wood Primary School and Nursery Early Years (EY) Policy

## **Rationale**

At Alban Wood we follow the Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which was introduced in September 2012. It sets the standards for Learning, Development and Care for children from birth to five. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The process of planning, observation and assessment are inextricably linked in EY. This policy aims to clarify the processes of observation and assessment, which are necessarily ongoing and formative throughout the key stage. The key principle is that pupils are observed, and their significant achievements recorded, so that their next steps can be supported and provided for, as well as their achievements celebrated. This is always a positive process, which should be transparent to all parties: pupils, all EYFS staff, parents/carers and those for whom the information is reported (SLT and Local Authority).

This policy is written in the context of the revised EYFS curriculum and assessment arrangements 2013.

## **Aims and Principles**

For the purpose of this policy document EY refers to 3,4, 5 year olds in the Nursery and Reception classes. There are four guiding principles that shape our practise at Alban Wood School. These are:

- Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Through **positive relationships** children learn to be strong and independent.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, which provide experiences that respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- That **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates** and are all included and supported.

Based on these four principles we endeavour to give children in their early years high quality care and education leading to secure foundations on which future learning can build. We endeavour to enable all children to participate, enjoy and achieve in a rich, play-based curriculum, indoors and outdoors, with a planned balance of adult-led and child initiated activities. We aim to provide an environment where children feel safe, supported and valued, an environment that extends their learning and development and which helps children get the best possible start in life.

## **Equal Opportunities**

At Alban Wood School we provide all pupils, regardless of ability, race, disability or gender, equal access to the curriculum.

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum on offer and to access all areas of the School. We aim to identify children with special needs early and differentiate their activities accordingly, providing extra support when needed from the Class Teachers, Nursery Nurses and Teaching Assistants. To further meet the needs of the children we have an INCo (Inclusion Coordinator) who can offer direct support for practitioners, parents/carers and the children themselves. S/he will contact outside agencies to give advice and support.

## **Government initiatives affecting practice at AW**

The Government provides free education for 3 and 4 year olds for 15 hours per week for 38 weeks a year. It sets out 5 major outcomes for children – *being healthy; staying safe; enjoying and achieving; making positive contributions and economic well-being*. The EYFS framework enables settings to support children in meeting these outcomes.

- Wrap around care at Alban Wood with its Breakfast Club and After School Club is well established for children of all ages including EY children.
- For EY children attending more than one setting, we endeavour to ensure effective continuity and progression by sharing relevant information with each other and parents.

## The Early Years Team

The team comprises teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants. The Deputy teacher is the Early Years leader.

Effective teamwork is essential in providing an appropriate curriculum and environment for young children. To this end meetings and discussions are held amongst the EY staff (and the Head when appropriate). An allocation for resources to support the EY curriculum is made each year within the whole school budget. Practitioners are supported in their continuing professional development to ensure that EYFS practice is current, innovative and self-evolving. Furthermore, practitioners are supported in their continuing professional development.

### Admissions, Induction and Transfer

A child's first experience of school has a lasting effect upon him/her (and indeed on their parents) and so we aim to make the transition from home to nursery to reception to KS1 as 'painless' and as enjoyable as possible. Admission procedures in N + R are flexible to allow time for discussion with parents and for children to feel secure in the new setting.

#### Admission to Nursery

- The Local Authority allocate nursery places.
- There are a maximum of 26 children per session (am + pm)
- Children start the term after their third birthday
- Children can spend up to five terms in the Nursery
- Free entitlement of 15 hours. (There are charges for Breakfast Club and After School Club)

#### Induction to the Nursery

- Alban Wood contacts parents by sending them all the initial paperwork and details of the induction dates and procedures. Prospective/new parents and their children are welcome to visit the Nursery by appointment, as are local pre-school groups.
- The Headteacher, Deputy headteacher class teacher meet with the new Nursery parents prior to the children starting Nursery at a Nursery Welcome meeting.
- Home visits are made at the beginning of each term. Practitioners are often accompanied by representatives from Leavesden Children's Centre. This gives parents/carers an opportunity to discuss their children's progress and development with practitioners, to ask any questions and to find out about local support for families with young children.
- The new children are introduced gradually into Nursery in small groups. Parents spend some time with their child initially – these arrangements are made flexible according to the needs of the child. Each child is allocated a key worker who will help ensure that the child 's learning and care is tailored to their individual needs and support parents in guiding their children's development at home.

#### Admission to Reception

- The Local Authority allocate reception places.
- The majority of our Nursery children enter our Reception and others join it from different settings
- One intake a year (in September)
- There is one form entry, maximum of 30 children
- The children spend three terms in Reception and move to Year 1 in the following September

#### Transfer and induction to Reception

- The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and class teacher meet with the new Reception parents at the end of term prior to their children's transfer.
- Reception practitioners spend time in the Nursery during the summer term getting to know the children. The reception teacher visits children from other settings by arrangement with their providers.
- All new children are invited to visit Reception at the end of the summer term for a play session.
- The Reception class teacher makes home visits to new families to discuss the progress and development of their children, prior to their child starting school. S/he holds meetings at school with parents of children already attending AW Nursery.
- Initially children stay mornings and go home after lunch. This continues until all children have started and are settled (roughly one week) Each child is allocated a key worker who will help ensure that the child 's learning and care is tailored to their individual needs and support parents in guiding their children's development at home.
- The Early Years Leader holds a workshop for parents to learn about the curriculum and how they can support their children.

#### Transfer to KS1

Towards the end of the summer term a transition to Y1 meeting is held with the Headteacher. The Year 1 teacher visits the children in the Reception class and the children visit their new Year 1 classroom. The Reception teacher and Year 1 teacher discuss the progress and development of each child so that the transition is

seamless and they can build on the principles and approach encapsulated in EY. The Reception teacher is in the playground on the first day of the new term to greet the children and help them into their new Y1 class. Y1 continues the EY curriculum in the first term for those children not yet ready for the National Curriculum.

The transfer processes are reviewed regularly and adapted if necessary, in order to make the move from home to Nursery to Reception to KS1 positive.

### The Curriculum

The curriculum for the Early Years underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing the 'whole' child with their enduring educators, parents.

EY practitioners at Alban Wood School have a good understanding of the curriculum and acknowledge that the curriculum is everything the children do, see, hear and feel while in our setting. It includes unplanned as well as planned activities. It is our aim to make it fun, motivating and relevant for each child.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. As early year practitioners, we build on that learning and experience by providing a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum based on the seven areas of learning identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which allows each child to develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually to his/her potential.

All areas of learning are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, called the **prime areas**, are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The three prime areas are strengthened and applied through the remaining four areas, called the **specific areas**, which are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

### Planning

In order for us to offer a curriculum which meets the needs (stage of development/interests) of both Nursery and Reception children, planning takes place within each year group following a general theme. Teachers and practitioners meet regularly to plan and discuss 'what next'.

Planning takes into account the Development Matters Statements, the Early Learning Goals and also the National Curriculum where appropriate. It promotes the four principles, which underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EY curriculum. The planning is flexible and is adapted to everyday circumstances, spontaneous events and children's interests. It is delivered through purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated activity. In Reception parents are also invited on a fortnightly basis to join pre-planning sessions with the class.

In planning and guiding activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn. The characteristics of effective learning are

- Playing and exploring –children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- Active learning –children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and thinking critically –children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning is a tool for providing evidence of the activities and opportunities we offer in our setting. We continually aim to improve standards by monitoring, evaluating and reviewing how we teach, what we teach and how we plan, assess and organise.

### Outdoor provision

Outdoor provision in the Early Years at AW School is a part of everyday life and is available for all children so that it becomes a valued part of the whole learning environment. Activities are well planned and cover the 7 areas of learning.

Both Nursery and Reception classes have their own enclosed, but connecting, outdoor areas. They also have access to the KS1 playground and the general school grounds.

## **Assessment in EY: The cycle of processes which will support quality learning**

Assessment plays an important part in helping practitioners and parents/carers recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. We observe the children during both child initiated play and adult directed activities to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting these observations. We take photographs, write observation notes and keep samples of the children's work. We welcome and encourage observations, photographs or samples of work from home. These are all kept in individual children's learning journals and provide evidence of progress against the development matters statements. This evidence is recorded in such a way that age related progress can be tracked throughout EY.

We observe children in the process of learning and record their significant achievements in order to:

- Find out about children as individuals: their interests, choices, needs, and development stages
- Inform planning and provision, in order that we can most successfully motivate, engage and enthuse all learners
- Monitor progress, so that children can be supported with their next steps in the most appropriate way
- Evaluate our curriculum offer ('how well is the planned curriculum matching the received curriculum?')
- Provide a focus for all communication: with children, parents, practitioners and wider colleagues.

Finally, the process of observation and assessment is established to sustain quality learning. The final points from the EYFS statutory guidance, make this explicit.

- "Children need to be stretched but not pushed beyond their capabilities, so that they can continue to enjoy learning. The keys to achieving this are: ongoing observational assessment to inform planning for each child's continuing development through play based activities; a flexible approach that responds quickly to children's learning and development needs; coherence of learning and development across different settings and related to the child's experience at home"
- "None of the areas of learning and development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activity"

### **On entry assessment (Nursery)**

Before children start in Nursery the child's class teacher/keyworker will make a home visit. Information from the home visit combined with observations of the child during their first few weeks in school, with a focus on the prime areas of PSED, CL and PD as well as two of the specific areas of M and L, will be used to assess their developmental stage. The judgements made are used to provide starting points for future learning and development and to demonstrate the progress children make during their time in the EYFS. See the assessment calendar and annual strategic calendar for details of precise timescales.

### **On entry assessment (Nursery-Reception transition)**

For children transferring from AW Nursery, a quality dialogue between Nursery and Reception staff will allow their learning journey to continue. Developmental stages are used consistently to track progress throughout N and Rec. Assessment judgements will be monitored carefully during the children's first few weeks, though their exit from N is normally expected to be the same as their entry to Reception (some children may have made additional progress in the Summer, of course). For children new to AW in Reception the on-entry assessment process is as stated above with Nursery.

### **Assessment and record keeping in practice**

Formative and ongoing assessment should be made up of the following approaches:

- Short observations of child-initiated play, which record the specific, pertinent achievement made by the child. Where these are particularly significant these will be recorded in the child's journal (with accompanying photographs or 'work' samples as appropriate). These will be collated in their learning journey, and will be used to track progress and plan for next steps and the necessary provision to facilitate these next steps.
- Longer observations of child-initiated play. Each key worker will undertake long observations (10-15 minutes) when relevant capturing purposeful and new play. These are then added to learning journeys.
- On occasions children may also be targeted in advance, and their observations will feed into key planning decisions in the following week in relation to extending the child's interests and needs. Observations will always include staff members interacting with children—engaging in quality dialogue, sustained play etc to support their language development and to ensure that pupils do not feel 'tested'. As well as this the observations capture the characteristics of effective learning— engagement, motivation and thinking.
- Timed tracking of groups. When relevant, one member of staff will undertake a timed tracking of a group of children, both to assess their involvement and well-being, and to evaluate the learning provision provided (for example, 'are boys accessing and enjoying the role-play area?'). This will feed into conversations with all pupils about their choices for child-initiated learning and their ideas for new or developing class topics or themes. This also supports teachers to plan for the continuous and enhanced provision in the classroom.
- Evaluation of learning. This will take place in relation to child-initiated learning and adult-led focus activities. In the former, overall provision must be evaluated and implications for the next week recorded; in the latter, child-specific pertinent comments will lead to planning their next steps.

### **Summative assessment**

- At points in the year, summative assessment judgements must be made. Throughout EY this will be through

the use of developmental stages (16—26 months, 22—36 months, 30—50 months and 40—60 months). At the baseline, and at four subsequent points in the year (October, December, March, June), staff will assess which stage children are working within, in all seven areas of learning, and whether they are **entering** into this band, **developing** within it or **securing** the band. These judgements will be a 'best fit' recognising that all children's learning journeys are unique. Progress will be discussed and shared for each child (pupil progress meetings, and parents' evening meetings termly), considering each child's starting point.

### **Exit from Reception assessment**

- At the end of Reception, summative judgements are made using the **EYFS Profile** (EYFSP). At this point, each child will be assessed as working towards the Early Learning Goals (ELG), meeting the expected level of the ELGs or exceeding these levels. Each child's development is assessed against the early learning goals as to whether they are **meeting** expected levels of development, or if they are **exceeding** expected levels or not yet reaching expected levels (**emerging**). In addition to this, A 'good level of development' is defined as children achieving at least the expected levels in the ELGs of PSE, CL and PD (prime areas), as well as Mathematics and Literacy. Progress from children's starting points will always be taken into account.
- The EYFS Profile is completed for each child by the class teacher and is then shared with parents. This provides parents/carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. A short commentary is written on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning. These are shared and discussed with parents and with the year 1 teacher to assist with planning activities in Year 1.

### **The records that we keep to support summative assessment include:**

- Electronic Learning Journals (short observations, long observations, photographs, samples of learning, pupil and parent comments) We take photographs, write observation notes and keep samples of the children's work – these are collated in the form of an electronic learning journal. We welcome and encourage observations, photographs or samples of work from home. Observations and photographs from home go in each child's personal learning space in their classroom. Photographs of their learning space are uploaded into their electronic journals. Journals are emailed to parents on a monthly basis and parents are given the opportunity to comment on these journals. Furthermore, these journals provide evidence of progress against the development matters statements. This evidence is recorded in such a way that age related progress can be tracked through Nursery and Reception.
- Feedback sheets from adult-led focus activities (assessment folder)
- Evaluations on planning (planning folder)
- Summative data recorded through Assessment Manager 7 and the EYFS Progress Toolkit. This provides tracking sheets and records to support analysis of vulnerable groups, including comparisons of the learning of boys/girls, summer born pupils, pupils receiving FSM etc.
- Pupil progress minutes following summative assessment points.
- End of year reports containing summative information for parents.

*We continually review and evaluate our assessment and recording procedures and amend these when necessary.*

### **Key points from the EYFS statutory guidance**

- "Providers must undertake sensitive observational assessment in order to plan to meet young children's individual needs."
- "Every child should be supported individually to make progress at their own pace."
- "Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Providers must make sure that practitioners are observing children and responding appropriately to help them make progress....assessments should be based on observations of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities."
- "Judgements are based on observational evidence gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts; it is expected that all adults who interact with the child should contribute towards the process and that account will be taken of information provided by parents"

*Thus the guidance is stating that ongoing assessment is both crucial to the process of learning, and requires a systematic approach and sensitivity in the way it is carried out. It is a shared responsibility across the EYFS and the core purpose of all staff roles.*

## **Transition to KS1**

### **Transition arrangements (Reception—Year 1)**

- As children move to Year 1, their EY achievements and assessments move with them. This takes the form of their on-going assessment records and their end of EYFS assessment information which is used in term 1 until children are ready to move on to NC assessment levels. For children who have exceeded ELG during Reception, assessments will have already been begun within NC level 1.
- In year 1, the process of observation continues to be especially important during the transition of play-based to more structured teaching and learning which takes place. Communication between colleagues is very important for ensuring successful transitions.

We continually review and evaluate our assessment and recording procedures and amend these when necessary.

### **Parents as Partners**

At Alban Wood we aim to develop effective partnership between parents and our setting because we believe that children's experiences at home are highly significant to achievement. Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and therefore they significantly influence their children's learning. Parents and practitioners working together make a positive impact on children's development and learning and help them to feel included, secure and valued.

Parents are invited to be partners on a regular basis through:

- Weekly stay and play sessions in both Nursery and Reception
- Personal learning spaces – parents are encouraged to contribute to these and are supported to do this during stay and play if needed
- WOW moments – parents are encouraged to complete WOW moments and speech bubbles from home.
- Fortnightly pre-planning sessions in Reception
- Parent workshops specific to Early Years – this always includes phonics in Autumn term
- Homework grids – practical ideas for parents at home to particularly support with CL and PSED

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

Please read this policy in conjunction with whole school policies e.g. Health and Safety, Behaviour, Inclusion, Child Protection.

Policy reviewed February 2015