Our motto ‘Only Our Best Will Do’ and ethos ‘It doesn’t matter where your starting point is, it’s where you finish that counts’ apply to all areas of the curriculum.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Date – April 2024

Review – April 2026

Intent

We believe that Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. 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 aim to give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning. We believe in the importance to offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences; and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence. Our pupils will, through encouragement and high expectations, develop to their full potential, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally. Our curriculum is planned to ensure that children know more, remember more and can build on this learning throughout their education and beyond.

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years. These are:

• 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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

• Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Implementation

Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive. These three areas support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas:

· Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking

· Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self care

· Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:

· Literacy – Reading and Writing

· Mathematics – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures

· Understanding the World – People and communities, The world and Technology

· Expressive Art and Design - Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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.

We ensure there is a balance of adult led/directed and child initiated/directed activities across the day; appropriate to the child's age and stage in their development. High quality interactions between the adult and child are essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing.

provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own.

Our ambitious curriculum is carefully considered based on the knowledge and skills children need to know ready to move up and build on these in Key Stage 1. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests; they learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

Literacy skills are taught through high quality texts as a hook for learning. Children learn about familiar tales, characters and settings and draw pictures with key words. Letter formation is taught daily as part of our phonics scheme and is ingrained into all teaching through modelling of words and sentences. Once pupils are writing, they are given lots of opportunities to write from dictated sentences, building up their speed, fluency and stamina to write by easing the cogitative load.

Writing activities feature in continuing provision and we provide enticing areas for children to sit both indoors and out where they can write for pleasure and purpose.

We teach phonics and early reading using the new updated FFT's Success for All phonics programme, which is a complete Systematic Synthetic Phonics (SSP) programme validated by the DfE. FFT's Success for All Phonics gives children a daily phonics and reading lesson from EYFS to the end of Year 1. The daily lessons

cover all the main Grapheme–Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) and Common Exception Words to provide children with the phonic knowledge and skills required for success in becoming a fluent and accurate reader by the end of KS1. The programme introduces phonics and its application to early reading in a carefully sequenced and progressive way: moving from developing phonological awareness through rhyme, to introducing Grapheme–Phoneme Correspondences (GPCs) in order, through a six-phased progression. Children will learn the skills of blending and segmenting as new GPCs are introduced, reinforcing them throughout the programme. The programme also teaches children to read common exception words. These are words which cannot be decoded phonetically and have to be recognised on sight. The programme aims to build confident readers through the consistent, systematic, and daily teaching of the Success for All Phonics programme with accompanying 'Shared Readers'. Our aim is for children to become fluent, confident readers by the end of Key Stage 1.

Impact

When leaving Reception, our pupils will be well-equipped with face the demands of the Key Stage 1 curriculum. They will have already experienced learning which has been planned to feed into their future schooling. Our children will...

- Be happy, confident learners who are engaged in what they are doing
- Be able to choose, make decisions and question what they see and hear
- Be well rounded and developed socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally
- Be kind, respectful and honest, demonstrating inclusive attitudes and have a sense of their role in wider society
- Be capable of building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- Be able to recognise their own strength and achievements and be proud of their work
- Be able to use a wealth of words that they have acquired through listening to stories and high-quality interactions with adults

Our Nursery

The Practitioner's role

Our practice has the child's interests at the heart of the foundation. We operate a fully play focussed, free flow environment between indoors and out with rich continuous provision and meaningful play experiences. The adult's role is to listen, model, encourage and enhance play situations whilst extending learning.

The Learning Environment

Our space is a soft, nurturing and free-flowing environment that allows the children to learn and explore through rich continuous provision and meaningful play experiences that incorporate the educational programmes. This includes a large outdoor space to dig, explore, build and climb. We are a setting that

supports and values purposeful and risky play. Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time at play. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and managed play environment.

'Play is great for children's wellbeing and development. When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefits. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped in cotton wool.'

Managing Risk in Play Provision: An Implementation Guide (Play Safety Forum, 2012) - here

Both indoors and outdoors offer a cosy 'safe place' to retreat to when needed and supports self-regulation. We strive to ensure our environment meets the individual needs of all the children with a wide variety of resources to inspire imaginations.

Our curriculum

Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.

- The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.
- Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.
- Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line.
- Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way

(Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage)

We follow FFT phonics, a well-planned and highly effective programme delivered through daily sessions with the children. In Nursery, children focus on discriminating environmental sounds and alliteration. When they are ready, they then move onto oral blending and segmenting. The correct enunciation of phonemes is crucial.

Pedagogy: helping children to learn

Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right support.

- Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.
- Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning.
- Children in the early years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning.
- Older children need more of this guided learning.

- A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy.

Self-regulation and executive function

- Executive function includes the child's ability to: – hold information in mind – focus their attention – think flexibly – inhibit impulsive behaviour.
- These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate: – concentrate their thinking – plan what to do next – monitor what they are doing and adapt – regulate strong feelings – be patient for what they want – bounce back when things get difficult.
- Language development is central to self-regulation: children use language to guide their actions and plans. Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.
    - (Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage)

Assessment, Observations and Planning

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development process within the EYFS. It involves close observations to ascertain interests, style of play, needs and achievements in line with the national curriculum. Observations and assessments ensure we have evidence to support development and progress. Albrighton nursery operates a mix of adult led and child led planning, enabling children to learn through meaningful exploration and investigation.

Assessment: checking what children have learnt

- Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.
- Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.
- Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.
- Assessment does not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time

(Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage)

Partnership with Parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child while in our care. We want parents and carers to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. We offer Stay and Play sessions every term throughout the year for both existing and prospective families. We have a monthly newsletter and all parents and carers are involved in Nursery events throughout the year.

Through FAMLY, our on-line learning journey, parents are encouraged to complete the 'All About Me' section with their child to give us an early picture of their child's interests, background, routines, likes and dislikes. Parents and carers are encouraged to stay with their child while they settle into their new environment.

It is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.

- This includes listening regularly to parents and giving parents clear information about their children's progress.
- The help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on their learning.
- Some children get much less support for their learning at home than others. By knowing and understanding all the children and their families, settings can offer extra help to those who need it most.
- It is important to encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children.

(Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage)

Home/School Links

When parents/carers and practitioners work closely together, building strong relationships together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's immediate and long-term development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to meet this in the following ways:

On-line interactive learning journey allowing parents and carers to see their child's journey alongside the ability to create and send observations from home.

- Regular newsletters and e-mails keeping parents and carers up to date with what is going on.
- Regular Stay and Play sessions.
- Operating an 'Open-Door' policy, whereby parents and carers can come and discuss concerns and developments with any of the staff at anytime.
- Handover at the end of every session or day.
- Encourage parents/carers to support learning at home.

Pre-school to Reception Transition

We continue to work closely with Reception and maintain close links throughout the year.

At Pre-school:

- Both Nursery and Reception children share playtimes in the summer term.
- From the Spring Term, Pre-School children attend assemblies with Reception.
- Closer to the end of the Summer Term, Pre-School will meet their new teachers at organised transition sessions. Parents and Carers will also be invited to come in and meet the new teachers alongside their child.
- Practitioners and Reception teachers will meet to discuss individual needs and development levels of the children.

At Albrighton Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023

· Safeguard children.

• Ensure the adults who have contact with children are suitable.

• Promote good health.

• Support and understand behaviour.

• Maintain records, policies, and procedures.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See the Albrighton Primary School Safeguarding Policy). Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

Intimate Care - "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing and changing underwear.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins reception at Albrighton Primary.

SEND

SEND Statement - Children with additional needs are included in whole class lessons, with teachers using adaptive teaching methods to enable children to access the learning. Throughout the early years, if we have concerns about a child's progress in any prime area, practitioners and teachers discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. We consider early identification to be key and swiftly establish what additional support a child needs.

Useful documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- *Phonics policy*