STOW-on-the-WOLD
PRIMARY SCHOOL

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# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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| **Approved By:** | **Full Governing Board** | **Date:** | **21st September 2026** |
| **Last Reviewed on:** | **21st September 2026** | **Next review due by:** | **20th September 2026** |
| **Signature:** T.A. Bartlett | | **Signature:** | |
| **Chair of Governors** | | **Headteacher** | |

At **Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School** we agree that:

"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."

*(The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE)*

The **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School, all children join Reception full time following an initial period of transition. This includes opportunities to visit the school and meet their teacher before starting, alongside our induction arrangements in September. We recognise that every child arrives with their own unique experiences, knowledge, interests and needs, and we aim to make the transition into school as positive and nurturing as possible.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- 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;
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

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**A Unique Child**

At Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we work closely with families to develop a holistic understanding of each child.

We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise, encouragement and positive relationships to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem.

During their first year at school, children are introduced to positive learning behaviours. They are encouraged to be **observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning**. Children are taught how to learn, how to

become successful learners and that everyone can learn through practice, effort and perseverance.

We believe that children should develop a strong sense of themselves as learners. Our curriculum therefore provides opportunities for children to make choices, take appropriate risks, solve problems, persevere when learning is challenging and develop increasing independence.

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**Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of difference. All children are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of their background, beliefs, identity, individual needs or stage of learning. All children and their families are valued members of our school community.

We believe that all of our children matter and take pride in giving every child the opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of children's individual life experiences, interests, strengths and needs when planning for their learning.

In the Early Years, children begin to take increasing responsibility for their learning and develop an understanding of challenge. We provide appropriate challenge and support so that every child can make progress from their individual starting point.

Early identification of special or additional needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school SENDCO is consulted for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disability policy.

In the EYFS, we have realistic and challenging expectations and meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experiences and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's individual learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe, calm and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued;
- adapting provision, resources, interactions and teaching to meet individual needs;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

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**Welfare**

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

*(The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE)*

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children about boundaries, rules and limits and provide them with opportunities to develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe.

Children should be allowed to take appropriate risks as part of their learning and development, but they need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards in both the real and virtual world.

We promote children's physical and emotional wellbeing and encourage them to develop independence in managing their personal needs. Adults provide consistent, nurturing relationships and model safe, respectful and healthy behaviours.

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**Positive Relationships**

At Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School, we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships.

We develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Adults take time to listen to children, understand their individual needs and interests and respond sensitively to their ideas and experiences.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop positive relationships with all children, interacting purposefully with them and taking time to listen, talk and respond. Through these relationships, adults support children to develop confidence, self-regulation, independence and positive relationships with others.

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**Parents as Partners**

We recognise the important role parents and carers play in educating and supporting children. We believe that effective partnerships between home and school provide children with the strongest foundations for learning and development.

We do this by:

- inviting parents and carers to an induction meeting before their child starts school;
- providing opportunities for children and families to meet their teacher and become familiar with the school environment before starting;
- providing information sessions to support parents' understanding of areas such as phonics and early reading;

- using our online communication platforms (Tapestry and Trello) to share appropriate observations, photographs and information about children's learning;
- encouraging parents and carers to contribute to their child's learning journey by sharing achievements, special moments and learning from home;
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings to discuss their child's progress;
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year;
- providing plentiful opportunities for parents and carers to catch up with teachers throughout the year through parents' evenings, class assemblies, book looks and other school events;
- arranging Learning Together sessions, which provide parents with information about specific learning goals and practical activities and strategies that can be used to support children's learning at home;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between children, school and parents, including assemblies, book looks, performances, parents' evenings, Sports Day and other opportunities to celebrate learning.

Learning Together sessions aim to give parents and carers a clear understanding of what children are learning, why they are learning it and how they can support this learning at home. Sessions provide practical examples of activities that can be easily incorporated into everyday family life.

We value the knowledge that families have about their children and encourage open communication so that we can work together to support every child's development.

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**Enabling Environments**

At Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development.

We provide a calm, purposeful and welcoming learning environment where children feel secure and able to focus. Our environment is deliberately designed to reduce unnecessary cognitive load, ensuring that resources, displays and learning materials are purposeful, accessible and carefully considered rather than overwhelming.

Classrooms are organised into clearly defined learning areas where children can independently find and use equipment and resources. Resources are accessible, open-ended and can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

Our environment is designed to encourage children to become independent learners whilst providing adults with opportunities to support and extend children's thinking.

Meaningful provocations are carefully set up within the provision to spark curiosity and encourage children to investigate, question, create and explore. These provocations are linked to the current curriculum, children's interests and their developmental needs.

We aim for children to 'bump into learning' throughout their day without always knowing that they are engaged in a planned learning experience. Through purposeful play and exploration, children can revisit, practise and apply knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts. Adults use these moments to model vocabulary, ask questions, make connections and sensitively extend children's thinking.

The indoor and outdoor environments provide opportunities for child-initiated learning, reflecting children's interests and current curriculum learning. Children can develop their motor skills, communication skills, social skills, creativity, problem-solving and independence across both environments.

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**Monitoring, Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Planning within the EYFS is carried out through provision mapping, ensuring that children's learning experiences are purposeful, intentional and closely linked to the current curriculum.

Provision maps identify the learning opportunities and experiences available within the continuous provision and clearly identify which area of development is being worked on within each activity. This enables practitioners to understand the intended learning behind each experience whilst maintaining the flexibility and creativity that are central to effective Early Years practice.

Provision mapping considers the current curriculum focus, children's interests, developmental needs, prior learning and next steps. Activities are designed to immerse children within their area of learning and encourage them to apply knowledge and skills through meaningful experiences rather than simply completing an adult-directed task.

Our planning therefore provides a balance of:

- adult-directed teaching;
- small-group and focused learning;
- independent challenges;
- enhancements to continuous provision;
- meaningful provocations;
- child-initiated exploration and play;
- indoor and outdoor learning experiences.

We plan for purposeful activities that connect with the current curriculum, allowing children to make meaningful links between what they have been taught and their independent exploration. Adults use their knowledge of children's learning to intervene sensitively, extend vocabulary, challenge thinking and support children to apply their knowledge.

Provision is continually reviewed and adapted in response to children's learning and development. This ensures that children are immersed in rich areas of learning throughout the day and that the environment reflects their current learning journey.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning and provision reflect identified needs and next steps.

Assessment in the EYFS is based on observation, discussion, questioning, interaction and evidence of children's independent learning. Valuable evidence is obtained through observing children during both independent and targeted learning. These observations are undertaken by teachers and teaching partners throughout the year.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning by sharing achievements, special moments and learning from home through our chosen communication systems.

Any children who are identified as not making expected progress or who require additional support are discussed with the appropriate staff and parents, and suitable support is put in place.

Progress is tracked against the Early Learning Goals using Development Matters and Birth to 5 Matters as supporting guidance. A progression of skills document is also used to provide a reference for expected progression in skills at different points throughout the year.

Assessment information is analysed at appropriate points throughout the year to identify areas of strength and areas requiring further development within the cohort. This information informs teaching, provision mapping and targeted support.

Hotlists are formed at the end of each assessment point in the year. This allows for individual children to be highlighted who need direct intervention and targeted support to help them keep up and not have to catch up. These children will be in the focus for thr following term to ensure they make good levels of progress.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, making a professional judgement about children's attainment against the 17 Early Learning Goals. Parents are provided with a written summary of their child's progress and have opportunities to discuss these judgements with their child's teacher.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are also considered as part of children's development and are reflected in teachers' assessments and comments.

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**The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where children can be active, quiet, creative and reflective.

The classroom is organised into clearly defined learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Resources are carefully selected to be accessible, open-ended and purposeful.

The learning environment is designed to be calm and reduced in cognitive load, allowing children to focus on their learning, interactions and exploration.

In addition, the EYFS has access to an outdoor learning environment. Outdoor learning is an important aspect of provision at Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School, with its positive impact on children's physical health, wellbeing and development being a significant factor.

Being outdoors offers opportunities for children to explore, use their senses and be physically active. It allows children to experience learning in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.

We plan activities and provide resources for children to access outdoors that support development across all areas of learning. Children are encouraged to independently transfer their learning between the indoor and outdoor environments.

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**Learning and Development**

At Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Through a carefully planned timetable and opportunities for sustained child-initiated learning, children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in activities and their learning.

Our approach provides a balance between direct teaching and purposeful play, recognising that children need opportunities to learn new knowledge and skills from adults before having time to practise, apply and deepen this learning independently.

Adults support children to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, modelling language, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions.

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**Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

**PRIME AREAS**

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

**SPECIFIC AREAS**

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

All of these areas are linked closely together and cannot be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend upon one another.

All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG**s)** that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

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**Communication and Language**

Effective communication is fundamental to children's learning and development. We aim to provide a communication-rich environment where children have regular opportunities to talk, listen, understand and express themselves.

Children **develop their listening and attention skills, learning to follow increasingly complex instructions and respond appropriately to what they hear. They develop confidence in speaking and expressing themselves, sharing ideas, experiences and feelings with adults and peers.**

**Children are introduced to and encouraged to use a wide range of new vocabulary, linked to themselves, their families, school, the wider world and the areas of learning they are exploring.**

**High-quality adult interactions are central to our approach. Practitioners model language, introduce new vocabulary, ask open-ended questions and encourage children to explain their thinking.**

**Through stories, rhymes, songs, poems, discussions and Drawing Club, children develop their understanding, communication and enjoyment of language.**

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**Literacy**

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum and our aim is to encourage a love of reading from the beginning of Reception.

Children are exposed to a wide range of high-quality stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction texts. Books are carefully selected to develop children's oracy, vocabulary, comprehension, imagination and knowledge of the wider world.

Stories are embedded throughout the provision and provide inspiration for discussion, role play, writing and creative activities.

We use Twinkl Phonics as our systematic approach to teaching phonics. Children develop their knowledge of phonemes and graphemes and learn to blend sounds to read words. They develop confidence in applying their phonics knowledge to reading and writing.

Alongside phonics, children develop their understanding of print, books, sentences and the purpose of writing. They are given regular opportunities to develop their mark-making, letter formation, spelling and composition skills through adult-led teaching and meaningful opportunities within the provision.

Through Drawing Club and continuous provision, children develop their imagination, vocabulary and ability to communicate ideas through drawing and writing.

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**Mathematics**

In Reception, we follow the NCETM Mastering Number programme, developing a deep and secure understanding of number through carefully sequenced teaching and practical experiences.

Children develop their understanding of counting, cardinality, subitising, composition, comparison and number relationships. They are encouraged to explain their mathematical thinking and develop confidence in using mathematical vocabulary.

Mathematical learning is supported through the use of concrete manipulatives, pictorial representations and practical experiences, enabling children to develop conceptual understanding before applying their knowledge independently.

Alongside Mastering Number, children develop their understanding of shape, space and measure, drawing on appropriate elements of the White Rose Maths approach.

Mathematics is also embedded throughout the provision. Children are encouraged to apply their mathematical knowledge during construction, role play, outdoor learning, games and everyday routines. This allows children to experience mathematics as meaningful and relevant to their everyday lives.

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**Wider Curriculum**

Our wider curriculum is taught through the EYFS areas of Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design, whilst recognising that learning in the Early Years is interconnected across all seven areas of learning.

Children are provided with opportunities to explore the natural and wider world, develop their understanding of people and communities, investigate materials and living things and begin to develop an awareness of change over time.

We encourage children to use subject-specific vocabulary and develop knowledge that will provide a strong foundation for their future learning across the National Curriculum. Adults model appropriate vocabulary and support children to use and apply new knowledge within their play and exploration.

Expressive Arts and Design provides children with opportunities to develop their creativity, imagination and ability to express themselves. Children explore a wide range of materials, techniques, music, movement, role play and imaginative experiences.

Our inclusive approach ensures that all children are supported to access the curriculum and provision. Where children require additional support or challenge, practitioners adapt activities, interactions and the learning environment to meet their individual needs.

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**Playing and Exploring**

Children's play reflects their wide-ranging and varied interests and experiences. Through play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and can learn at their highest level.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which enable them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules.

Our children have opportunities to think creatively alongside other children as well as independently, whilst being given the space to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Children are given access to resources freely and are encouraged to move and combine them to extend their learning.

We carefully design the provision so that children's play is purposeful and connected to the curriculum. Meaningful provocations encourage children to investigate and explore, allowing them to bump into learning naturally as they play.

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**Active Learning**

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. We allow children to have independence and control over aspects of their learning and provide them with the space to develop their confidence and make decisions.

We recognise that children need time to become deeply involved in their learning. Our provision allows children to revisit experiences, practise skills and develop increasing mastery.

We encourage children to persevere when they encounter difficulties and celebrate their achievements. Adults support children to develop resilience by modelling positive attitudes towards challenge and encouraging children to have a go.

We believe that children develop a strong sense of satisfaction and ownership when they have opportunities to take responsibility for their learning.

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**Creating and Thinking Critically**

We provide children with opportunities to develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Adults support children's thinking by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. We encourage children to explain their thinking, consider different possibilities and reflect on their experiences.

Children are provided with opportunities to solve problems, investigate, predict, test ideas and adapt their thinking.

We provide opportunities for children to be creative through all areas of learning, not only through the arts. Our open-ended resources and carefully planned provision encourage children to use their imagination and think critically.

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**Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

As a school, we work together to enable our pupils to **Be Safe, Be Supportive and Persevere**, which are our school rules.

Stow-on-the-Wold Primary School supports SMSC development across all areas of learning.

**Spiritual Development**

Children are given opportunities to explore a range of beliefs, cultures and traditions through stories, celebrations and experiences. They explore feelings and values and learn about themselves, others and the world around them.

Children are introduced to the importance of looking after themselves and others, including healthy eating, physical activity, rest and positive mental wellbeing. They are given opportunities to relax, reflect and develop an awareness of their emotions.

**Moral Development**

Children are taught to recognise right and wrong and understand the importance of rules and boundaries.

Positive behaviours are promoted, modelled and praised by adults. Through play and everyday interactions, children learn how to be a good friend, share, work together, listen and respect other people's ideas, feelings and wishes.

**Social Development**

Through continuous provision, children are given opportunities to choose activities and play with or alongside other children.

Children learn that everyone is unique and that we all have different interests, likes, dislikes, experiences and backgrounds. They learn that it is positive to be different and that everyone's contribution is valued.

Respectful behaviour is modelled and expected at all times, including turn-taking, listening to others and communicating appropriately when something is not wanted or does not feel comfortable.

**Cultural Development**

Children are taught to appreciate and celebrate different cultures and traditions throughout the year.

Children learn songs, listen to stories and visitors, role play, dance to music, make crafts, take part in activities and explore food and traditions from a range of cultures.

Through these experiences, children develop an appreciation of the diverse world around them and begin to understand and respect similarities and differences between themselves and others.