



Milldown
CE Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2021

'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.'

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2021)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to communicate our philosophy, aims, principles and ethos in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Milldown CE Academy. Our philosophy is based on nurturing life long learners by valuing the individual child and supporting them in developing their creativity and social skills. We believe that a child with high self-esteem will flourish in education and life.

Aims and Principles

At Milldown CE Academy, we are determined to create the right environment for children when they first start school. We carefully plan every aspect of the school year with the following aims in mind:

- ◆ To ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
- ◆ To deliver an Early Years curriculum that deals with educating the whole child so that they are life long learners.
- ◆ To ensure that no child should be excluded or disadvantaged.
- ◆ To ensure that early years experiences build upon what children know and can already do.
- ◆ To ensure that parents/carers and practitioners work together.
- ◆ To create a happy purposeful atmosphere, based on a spirit of co-operation between members of staff, children and parents.
- ◆ To be concerned with the exploration of the world through senses, feelings and experiences, allowing young children to learn through well-planned play activities.
- ◆ To provide active learning experiences, giving children opportunities to explore practical activities, make decisions independently, and develop problem-solving skills.
- ◆ To provide structured teaching activities, which start from the child's knowledge and understanding.
- ◆ To promote independence, confidence and a sense of responsibility.
- ◆ To provide well organised, rich and stimulating experiences.
- ◆ To encourage children to explore, experiment, plan and make decisions for themselves.
- ◆ To ensure that we provide high quality care and education.
- ◆ To ensure that we work in partnership with children and parents/carers, building an honest and open relationship.

Entitlement and Equal Opportunities

- ◆ All children start at Milldown CE Academy in the September of the year in which they will be 5 years old, unless their parents successfully appeal to defer entry.
- ◆ All children are provided with equal access to the whole of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum regardless of their gender, race, ability or season of birth.
- ◆ The children work at their own level, progressing through the developmental stages, leading to the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

The Early Years Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

We adhere to the EYFS Statutory Regulations (2021) and follow Development Matters. Therefore, we teach according to the seven key features of effective practice as highlighted in Development Matters (2021):

- **The best for every child**
 - All children deserve to have an equal chance of success
 - High-quality early education is good for all children. It is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds
 - Children who have lived through difficult experiences can begin to grow stronger when they experience high quality early education and care
 - High-quality early education and care is inclusive. Children's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning
- **High-quality care**
 - The child's experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner
 - Babies, toddlers and young children thrive when they are loved and well cared for
 - High-quality care is consistent
 - Every practitioner needs to enjoy spending time with young children
 - Effective practitioners are responsive to children and babies
 - They notice when a baby looks towards them and gurgles and respond with pleasure
 - Practitioners understand that toddlers are learning to be independent, so they will sometimes get frustrated
 - Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for small children
- **Curriculum**
 - The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn
 - 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.
- **Pedagogy**
 - Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help
 - 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
 - A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy
- **Assessment**
 - 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
 - Before assessing children, it's a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful
 - Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time
- **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.
- **Partnership with parents**
 - 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.

Putting these Principles into practice

Through our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum across all areas of learning
- Promote equal opportunities to ensure all children can access our curriculum and make progress
- Work closely with parents and form links with the wider community
- Plan challenging learning opportunities which are informed by observation and assessment
- Develop positive relationships with individual children
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment, maximising our use of the outdoors

Learning and Development

There are 7 curriculum areas and 17 Early Learning Goals. We believe that all areas of the EYFS curriculum are equally important and interrelated.

The curriculum is centred on three Prime Areas of Learning:

Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

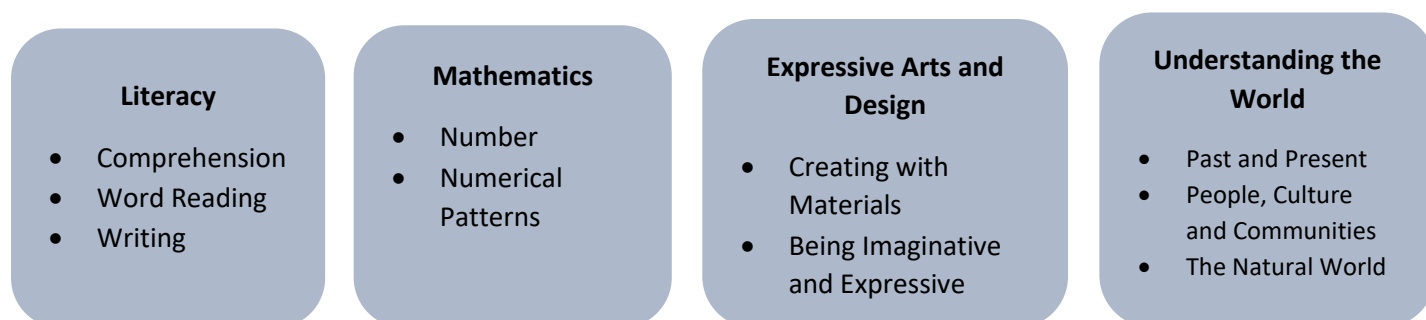
Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Physical Development

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

There are also four Specific Areas of Learning. These include essential skills and knowledge that enable children to participate successfully in society and allow them to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning:



These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning.

Alongside this, we follow our whole school curriculum policy (see *Milldown CE Academy's Curriculum Policy*).



In Early Years, the areas we focus on are shown below.

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
	Our Mind, Body & Soul	Community and Culture	Power, Peace & Conflict	The Natural World	Unite Our World	Hopes and Aspirations
EYFS	<p>Understand that it is important to look after yourself.</p> <p>Understand that just like we have physical health we also have mental health.</p>	<p>Understand that everyone is unique and has their own value.</p> <p>Understand that people can be different in some ways but similar in others.</p>	<p>Understand the difference between right and wrong and that actions have consequences.</p> <p>Understand and show the importance of listening, taking turns and sharing.</p>	<p>Understand that people have a responsibility to look after their immediate environment.</p> <p>Understand that the local area/environment has resources that we can use.</p>	<p>Understand what is fair and unfair.</p> <p>Understand the Importance of caring and sharing.</p>	<p>Understand that hard work has helped them to learn new things.</p> <p>Understand that there are lots of people that help others.</p>

Teaching and Learning

We aim to plan a broad and balanced range of activities based on the needs of the children in our setting. The learning opportunities we plan include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities, which are both indoors and outdoors. Educational trips and visits from members of our community are also integrated into the curriculum to support children's learning within the classroom. 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' guidance material is used to support our planning.

When planning and guiding these activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and support them in using the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These 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

Through modelling, questioning, suggesting ideas and challenging the children's thinking we create an environment where they can develop the skills and dispositions associated with each of the three characteristics of effective learning.

Active Learning through Play

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our Foundation Stage offers rich opportunities to learn through play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. We believe that:

- Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language
- Play is flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child.
- Play can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.
- Play provides children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.
- Play supports children to discover, explore, investigate and to develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity.
- Play can help children to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts

Therefore, we always provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities both inside and outside. We always aim to plan activities that will allow children to participate in practical, first-hand experiences.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development and aim to provide stimulating and safe learning environments both indoors and outdoors.

We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop skills in all the areas of learning. Children will be encouraged to actively explore the world around them, developing their creativity, independence, thinking skills and ability to solve problems across the curriculum. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active.

Classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet or creative. The Reception classroom has access to an enclosed outdoor area and children are able to explore in both areas throughout the day. Both areas are used for adult directed and adult initiated teaching.

Child Initiated Learning

Child initiated learning empowers the children to make their own decisions about how best they learn, their likes and dislikes, and develops co-operation and collaborative learning – all important life skills for the future.

Child initiated time is carefully planned to ensure that the learning reflects both the project being covered and the children's interests. Choices are monitored to ensure breadth of learning opportunities accessed by individual children.

The adults interact sensitively with children to support their thinking and learning. They also observe what the children are doing so that we can plan for the children the next session, day or week.

Adult Led learning

Through adult-led activities we can introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they experience all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We believe it is only through doing this, and practising the skills that they have learned that children will be able to take ownership of their learning and be able to apply it in different situations in their child initiated learning. Adult led learning may take place in the form of small group activities, whole class teaching or focused 1:1 work with a child.

Observations and Planning

We recognise the importance of observation in building up a picture of each child's unique development and progress.

- Observations form part of our daily practice and are used to inform future planning for groups and individual children.
- Observations are recorded in a variety of ways.
- All adults are involved in contributing to each child's online learning journal. This includes parents.
- We encourage children to take ownership of their learning and select work or photographs to add to their learning journals.
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning.
- Tapestry is used to collect all these observations along with the children's learning in their writing books.

We use these observations to support our developing knowledge of individual children. They inform them us of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Assessment

On-entry judgements are made during the first half term that children are in school. These are based on observing the knowledge, skills and dispositions that the children consistently demonstrate independently and in a range of contexts. These observations and judgements are used to inform next steps for learning and identify children who may need additional support or challenge.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development. Throughout the year we observe and work alongside the children to build up a picture of their development and progress through ongoing informal assessments. This helps practitioners to build up the unique Learning Journal record for each child's development.

Following the on entry judgements, there are three, formal assessment points, where the teachers will make a judgement on a child's current attainment across all curriculum areas. These assessment points are towards the end of each school term: December, March and June. Assessments are made on practitioners' accumulated knowledge of the whole child.

These judgements, alongside evidence from teacher led activities, are used to complete their end of year EYFS Profile.

The EYFS profile sums up and describes each child's development and learning attainment at the end of their Reception Year. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the seven areas of learning. The EYFS Profile is given to parents as part of each child's end of year report and is used by Year One teachers to enable them to plan their next steps.

Induction Arrangements and Partnership with Parents

The following opportunities are given to allow children and parents/carers to become familiar with their new school and teacher.

About Our School

Open days/evenings are held in the year before the child starts school. Our school Vision and Values are outlined, as well as admissions procedures and information on the curriculum. There is a detailed tour of the Reception classroom and all other areas in school. Parents/carers are given the opportunity to ask questions about admissions, our school philosophy etc. An admissions form and a school prospectus are available on request.

Liaison with Pre-School Settings

Meetings and conversations are held between pre-school leaders and the Early Years Foundation Stage Leader at Milldown CE Academy. During these meetings general practise is discussed as well as the needs of children currently in Early Years Foundation Stage and those due to start school in September. Children from our main feeder pre-school are also invited to visit the classroom for events during the year before they start school. In the term before the children start school, many of the pre-schools are visited by the Early Year's Foundation Stage Leader.

Home Visits

Home visits are carried out in the summer term before the child starts school. The class teacher and teaching assistant meet with the parents/carers, giving them the opportunity to discuss important information about their child and any worries or concerns they may have. The visits also give the school the opportunity to get to know the children and their families before the summer holidays so personalised discussions and advice can be given around 'school readiness'. Communication to parents around school-readiness is sent out regularly to ensure the children are best prepared to start school in September.

Staggered visits

During the first full school week in September, the children attend school in groups of 15 for half a day for the first 4 days, and as a whole class for the final half day. Over the course of the half days, the children are given a brief tour of the school hall, office and a visit to the Head Teacher's office. The Teachers and Teaching Assistants use this time to carry out some of the 'On entry' assessment. Classroom routines are introduced and the children begin to form relationships in a safe, secure environment.

Home/School Partnership

At Milldown CE Academy we value the contribution of all the adults involved in a child's life and strive to establish positive relationships with them, as highlighted in the EYFS Framework. We believe a good relationship with parents/carers is vital in the development of all children. We recognise that parents/carers are the children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We establish a positive relationship and recognise the role that parents/carers play through:

- ✓ Home school visit before the children begin school in September.

- ✓ Running curriculum workshops where we explain how we teach Reading, Writing and Mathematics and how they can support their child at home. These may include workshops in school as well as videos shared on tapestry.
- ✓ Holding formal parents/carers evening twice a year.
- ✓ Encouraging parents/carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- ✓ Report on children's progress and attainment at the end of the school year.
- ✓ Arranging activities throughout the year to invite parents/carers in to celebrate their child's learning, eg: performances or to share learning.
- ✓ Online learning journals using 'Tapestry'. Every parent is invited to join tapestry where photos of their child's learning is captured and sent to them. Parents are also invited to capture their own learning points at home and add these to the online learning journey.
- ✓ A whole class Tapestry account is set up where the learning of the class is shared with parents weekly.

Home School Learning

The children are encouraged to discuss the learning they do at home with parents/carers to develop their thought process. From the first week the children will take home a reading book to be shared with a parent/carer at least 4 times a week. This is to be recorded in the child's reading record. Parents/carers are informed of how they can support their children through Tapestry and as a result of meetings held with the Class Teacher. Spellings will be sent home in the Spring term.

Early Learning Goals

Communication and Language

ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions;
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding;
- Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with their teacher and peers.

ELG: Speaking

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary;
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate;
- Express their ideas and feelings about their experiences using full sentences, including use of past, present and future tenses and making use of conjunctions, with modelling and support from their teacher.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

ELG: Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others, and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly;
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate;
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge;
- Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly;
- Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices.

ELG: Building Relationships

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others;
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers;
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs.

Physical Development

ELG: Gross Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others;
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing;
- Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

ELG: Fine Motor Skills

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing – using the tripod grip in almost all cases;
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery;
- Begin to show accuracy and care when drawing.

Literacy

ELG: Comprehension

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary;
- Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories;

- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

ELG: Word Reading

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs;
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending;
- Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

ELG: Writing

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed;
- Spell words by identifying sounds in them and representing the sounds with a letter or letters;
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others.

Mathematics

ELG: Number

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Have a deep understanding of number to 10, including the composition of each number;
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5;
- Automatically recall (without reference to rhymes, counting or other aids) number bonds up to 5 (including subtraction facts) and some number bonds to 10, including double facts.

ELG: Numerical Patterns

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Verbally count beyond 20, recognising the pattern of the counting system;
- Compare quantities up to 10 in different contexts, recognising when one quantity is greater than, less than or the same as the other quantity;
- Explore and represent patterns within numbers up to 10, including evens and odds, double facts and how quantities can be distributed equally.

Understanding the World

ELG: Past and Present

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;
- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories, non-fiction texts and maps;
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and – when appropriate – maps.

ELG: The Natural World

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants;
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world around them and contrasting environments, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;
- Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter.

Expressive Arts and Design

ELG: Creating with Materials

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function;
- Share their creations, explaining the process they have used;
- Make use of props and materials when role playing characters in narratives and stories.

ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Invent, adapt and recount narratives and stories with peers and their teacher;
- Sing a range of well-known nursery rhymes and songs;
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with others, and – when appropriate – try to move in time with music.