



Early Years Policy

This policy is based upon the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2024) and the Development Matters Early Years Foundation Stage Non-Statutory Framework (2020, revised 2023) and should be read in conjunction with the whole school Teaching and Learning Policy, the SEND policy and the policy for River class - specialist SEND support document.

Structure of the Early Years Foundation Stage at Ivydale

The EYFS in Ivydale consists of a 30-place nursery which consists of children who attend 30 hours (Full time) or 15 hours (Monday, Tuesday & half day Wednesday OR half day Wednesday, Thursday & Friday). The nursery is staffed by one teacher and two support staff.

Two reception classrooms, each staffed by one teacher and one support staff.

Where necessary additional adults may work within the classrooms to support additional needs.

The phase is overseen by an Assistant Head for EYFS and EYFS SENCo.

In addition, children with additional needs or those that require early intervention support to ensure progress are supported by our specialist Nursery Nurse in River Class. (See additional policy for River class - specialist SEND support)

Curriculum - teaching & learning

The learning in the EYFS at Ivydale is based upon the EYFS Non-Statutory Development Matters Framework. The curriculum is built upon 7 areas of learning, which are all equal in importance: Communication and Language. Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development, Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts & Design.

Whilst all areas of learning are of equal importance, focus on supporting the Prime areas of Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development are key to providing children with the underpinning skills to become successful learners as they progress through Ivydale Primary school.

At Ivydale, we plan exciting and ambitious learning which is carefully sequenced to ensure we help children to build learning over time, deepening their experiences year on year. Young children often learn best when driven by their own interests, so the planning for children in the EYFS is flexible in its nature, allowing for the capacity to shift direction, extend the periods of time spent on topics or alter planning to encompass the diverse ways that children learn, e.g. taking learning outside.

Key consideration is given to the ways in which children learn, with attention given to the Characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- *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

In addition, children in the EYFS at Ivydale learn through a 'core experiences' approach which plans to give children exposure to key rich learning experiences, which are repeated on a regular basis. Through repetition children are guided from a position of high levels of adult support through to independence, e.g. through the core experience of playdough making, children will begin nursery requiring support to measure, mix and name equipment and ingredients and move to being able to independently make playdough, talking about what is happening and why and problem solving issues of consistency and texture.

The curriculum at every stage of the Ivydale journey is planned to equip children with the skills of resilience and prepare them for the next stage of their educational journey. This is evidenced through carefully planned transitions and a curriculum that demonstrates awareness of what comes before and what comes afterwards. The learning in the EYFS is carefully planned to meet the developmental needs

of the children and to build up the skills and concepts that they will need later on in their journey through the school.

Teaching and Learning at every age and stage encompasses our school values of Responsibility, Positivity and Respect.

The environment

Children in the Early Years learn inside and outside and have access to the outdoor environment for large portions of the day. Both areas are considered in the planning of the curriculum and recognition is given to the fact that some children may learn better in one space than the other.

In line with the theories of Loris Malaguzzi, we believe that the environment is the third teacher. By planning continuous provision opportunities for the environment, we ensure that children have rich play based exploratory play.

In a child's journey from Nursery to Reception they will be supported to build the skills of attention and listening and a love for learning, as these skills develop, an increased level of structure is built into the reception day, preparing children for the changes of Year 1. Transitions are slow and steady and consider the individual needs of each cohort.

Assessment

At Ivydale, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape planning for the future and to alter interactions in the moment.

Observations are recorded in children's 'Learning Journeys' detailing significant steps in learning and development. Progress is shared through parent meetings and on an adhoc basis to celebrate leaps in children's learning.

In nursery, children are baselined and regularly observed and assessed throughout the year to ensure that staff are aware of children's development and progress. This progress is monitored through termly pupil progress meetings, in line with advice set down in the non-statutory EYFS Development Matters. Where children are not making expected progress, support is given through small group intervention, enhanced support through River class and through SENCo and Assistant head support.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a statutory assessment which sits alongside school baselining practices.

Children in Reception are regularly observed and assessed throughout the year to ensure that staff are aware of children's development and progress. This progress is monitored through termly pupil progress meetings, in line with advice set down in the non-statutory EYFS Development Matters. Where children are not making expected progress support is given through small group intervention, enhanced support through River class and through SENCO and Assistant head support. At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers.

The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. They are also shared with the Year 1 teachers. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with Parents

Close working relationships with families are considered key to a successful start in Nursery or Reception at Ivydale.

When children join Ivydale, they are offered a stay & play session in the school to familiarise themselves with the environment and staff alongside their family members. In addition, children are visited within their home environment to build a rapport with staff and ensure staff have chance to learn about the children from a family's perspective. The settling in process ensures children have a confident, supportive, and calm start to school at Ivydale.

Each child in Nursery is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The SENCo in connection with the key person helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. Families have three formal parent meetings slots per academic year to discuss children's learning, development, and wellbeing. Parents and staff have opportunities to catch up informally on a daily basis.

Nursery families are invited to 3 parental engagement events every year to observe how teaching and learning occurs in the Nursery - with a focus on Story sacks - to demonstrate effective ways of supporting language; early mathematics skills and core experiences and a Summer exhibition to showcase children's work.

Families are invited to join children on the regular trips Nursery children attend and are invited in to support with reading, cooking and topic-based work.

In Reception, the child's key person is their teacher who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The SENCo in connection with the key person helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Curriculum presentations for parents and carers in Reception are based upon supporting early phonics skills and the ways in which children are effectively taught Maths in the Early Years which are followed by stay and play sessions. Children in Reception also take part in the Summer exhibition to showcase their work.

Parents receive half termly newsletters to update on the teaching and learning across the EYFS curriculum and in reception, weekly information related to phonics to enable parents to support at home. Parents are invited to share progress with reading through their child's reading record in Reception. Nursery children are supported to choose a high-quality text to take home on a weekly basis to for their families to share with them.