



Abingdon Prep School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.”

(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2025)

1. Introduction and Aims

At Abingdon Prep School we are all committed to providing the highest quality Early Years Education for children in our Reception class through a safe, caring and stimulating environment in which they can be happy, take risks and enjoy learning. A high emphasis is placed on the children developing a strong sense of identity while promoting warm, respectful and secure relationships within the school community. Children are provided with a combination of both a classroom based, creative curriculum developed from their own needs, interests and experiences, and an enhanced, skills-based curriculum focusing on Physical Education (including swimming), Computing, Music, Forest School, Investigation Station (Science) and Expressive Arts (including Dance and Drama). Through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities children can explore and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes to help them make sense of the world around them and help them to become lifelong, independent learners.

This policy has been developed to reflect the themes and commitments as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and statutory guidance referred to within the Framework.

The School appoints a Deputy DSL with specific responsibility for the EYFS. She is able to be contacted at sarah.eastaugh@abingdonprep.org.uk.

2. The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage extends from birth to the end of the Reception year and is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling.

Entry into the Reception class at Abingdon Prep is at the beginning of the school year in which the children turn five and reference should be made to the Admissions Policy for more information about the process. The Reception class is taught, nurtured and managed by a qualified Teacher and an experienced Teaching Assistant, with additional support from a qualified Forest School teacher and additional part time Teaching Assistant. These staff receive support and training to prompt the interests of children, foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement and are encouraged to have professional confidential discussions to promote the wellbeing of children.

The safety of children is of paramount importance so careful observation of the required child:adult ratios are observed in line with the EYFS Framework to ensure that children are supervised and usually within sight and hearing of staff but always within sight or hearing. When eating, children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff. Further details are in the school's Supervision Policy.

The EYFS has four themes:

A. A Unique Child

"Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured" (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

At Abingdon Prep School we aim to:

- recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates
- give equal weighting to all areas of development with an understanding of the factors that may affect an individual child's progress
- treat children as individuals and ensure each has equality of opportunity irrespective of gender, disability, race, religion or culture
- provide a safe and secure learning environment appropriate to all children
- teach children how to make choices, assess risks and keep themselves safe
- promote an environment in which every child feels able to make a positive contribution and enjoy personal success

- enable children to start to make healthy choices in relation to diet and exercise
- support children's emotional and social development
- be vigilant towards safeguarding issues.

B. Positive Relationships

"Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships"
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

At Abingdon Prep School we aim to:

- provide a friendly, helpful and highly informative program of induction for all children/families new to the class/school
- interact with children and their families in a caring and professional manner in order to build meaningful relationships, communicating with parents regularly about their children's progress and development.
- work closely with the families of all pupils to ensure children achieve their full potential, helping parents/carers in supporting their children in any way possible including academically, emotionally and socially. This may be through workshops, parent-teacher meetings, informal discussions
- assign each child to a key person (who will be the class teacher). The key person will help support their learning and development, ensuring the child's care is tailored to their individual needs and offering a settled relationship for the child and building warm, trusting relationships in order to support children's learning effectively.

C. Enabling Environments

"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."
(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

At Abingdon Prep School we aim to:

- plan a learning environment both inside and outside that encourages a positive attitude to learning
- put a strong emphasis on being outdoors to explore, use their senses and be physically active
- provide a well resourced environment that is safe, secure and accessible to all children
- carry out regular observations which inform the next steps for development and allow us to plan according to individual children's needs, interests

and abilities

- assess children according to the Foundation Stage Profile throughout the academic year in order to build a full picture of their learning.
- encourage children's natural exploratory nature through a wide range of activities and learn about risks including in weekly Forest School sessions.
- provide challenging yet achievable activities
- foster good links with the local and wider community to provide a varied selection of experiences and environments for the children to engage with.

D. Learning and Development

"Children learn and develop at different rates" (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)

We recognise that play underpins all learning and development for young children. Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. By providing well planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside, we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside and with other children and adults as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems and develop reasoning and questioning skills.

At Abingdon Prep School we aim to:

- show recognition of the crucial role that play has in every area of a child's development, supporting and extending it where appropriate
- provide the children with the time and space they need in order to experiment, solve problems and be creative
- offer a wide range of physical and mental challenges with an emphasis on active learning in order to engage children for sustained periods of time
- provide a balance of teaching and learning strategies to cater for the different learning styles of all children
- support children in making connections between things they have learned and experiences at home, at school and within the wider community
- keep parents/ carers informed about their children's development through parent/teacher consultations, written reports and informal conversations. In addition parents are also encouraged to come into school on specific mornings, to see their child's achievements. Parents also receive regular updates of their children's development through the online platform SeeSaw where parents can share their own feedback and comments.
- provide termly curriculum plans to parents via the school's website.

3. Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. Each of these seven areas of learning and development 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 are the **Prime** areas:

- (i) Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- (ii) Communication and Language**
- (iii) Physical Development**

Children are also supported through the four **Specific** areas, through which the Prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four **Specific** areas are:

- (iv) Literacy**
- (v) Mathematics**
- (vi) Understanding the World**
- (vii) Expressive Arts and Design.**

More detail on these areas is below:

(i) Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

This area of learning is about emotional well-being, knowing who you are and where you fit in and feeling good about yourself. It is also about developing respect for others, social competence and independence and a positive disposition to learning. PSED feeds into all subjects of the national curriculum.

We promote PSED through:

- Praising achievement
- Circle time and WOW! Sessions
- Resources promoting positive images of differences (games, books, puzzles)
- Multicultural resources
- Providing positive role models
- Secure routines and a safe environment

- Labelling resources clearly and making them accessible to children
- Ensuring there is time and space for children to focus on activities and experiences that develop their own interests
- Planning for children to work independently and also in collaborative groups where they need to share and co-operate
- Positive behaviour management systems (detailed in Pre-Prep Behaviour Policy).
- Promoting a sense of belonging to a community and working together to support their House (Dragon, Phoenix, Griffin, Unicorn) by gathering merits in the form of coloured counters. In addition we introduce the concepts of the Fundamental British Values and Protected Characteristics, which are woven through our topic areas and explored within assemblies and story time with the Head in an age and developmentally appropriate way and on a continual basis.
- Promoting independence throughout all areas of hygiene
- Encouraging an awareness of healthy lifestyles, through a range of visitors and activities linked to exercise and healthy food choices and the reasons behind these choices.

(ii) Communication and Language

This area of learning includes speaking and listening, involving the sustained ability to hold lengthy conversations, encompassing a range of questioning skills to develop and enhance knowledge. We promote Communication and Language by:

- Valuing children's talk
- Providing the children with opportunities to communicate their own thoughts, ideas and feelings and to develop conversation with children and adults
- Giving opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- Encouraging careful listening through games, stories, circle time and music
- Using open-ended questioning to stimulate thought and encourage the children to express their own thoughts and ideas
- Developing a program of Show & Tell events that begin with the child and then move to story telling opportunities and culminate in mini presentations of family special items
- Encouraging children to value, share and enjoy books together
- Linking language with physical movement eg action songs and rhymes.
- Involvement in project based activities allowing children to develop their confidence in front of a range of different audiences.

(iii) Physical Development

This area of learning includes moving and handling through large and small scale physical activity which develops an awareness and increased control of

children's own bodies. It also encompasses health and self-care promoting independence and an awareness of healthy lifestyle.

We promote PD by:

- Developing and improving coordination, control, manipulation and movement
- Offering appropriate physical challenges, enough space and time and a range of resources both inside and outside to develop skills such as climbing, balancing, throwing, catching and maneuvering wheeled toys
- Encouraging a variety of movement through dance and drama
- Developing fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination, through drawing, cutting, painting manipulating clay and dough, pouring sand and water, threading beads, construction toys, tools
- Encouraging handwriting skills by supporting fine motor control and hand-eye co-ordination through activities such as malleable play, jigsaws, pegs and peg boards, finger painting, drawing in sand trays etc.

(iv) Literacy

In this area of learning we begin linking sounds to letters and reading and writing simple words. We foster and promote a passion for storytelling, sharing books and developing early reading and writing skills.

We do this through:

- Providing an environment which promotes written language eg signs, labels, environmental print, book corner
- Promoting children's emergent writing through role play and in the writing area using a variety of writing materials and responding to stimuli such as post cards, greetings cards, envelopes, letters etc
- Providing opportunities for children to see adults writing for a purpose eg writing a shopping list for cookery ingredients the class needs
- Providing a rigorous Phonics program that is woven into the curriculum wherever possible
- Developing handwriting skills and establishing early spelling techniques in order to write words, phrases and simple sentences
- Encouraging children to retell stories using puppets, props, small world toys, story sacks and story maps
- Encouraging children's imaginative storytelling through role play, small world play, sand and water play
- Talking about the features of books especially in shared time
- Encouraging children to use a variety of cues when reading- manual, contextual, phonological
- Promoting a robust knowledge of phonics through the Read, Write inc. program which we develop using a multi-sensory approach
- Encouraging children to value, share and enjoy books together.

(v) Mathematics

This area includes number recognition, calculating and shape, space and measures.

We promote Mathematical skills, concepts and strategies by:

- Giving children a variety of experiences to count, sort, match and order real objects
- Developing mathematical understanding through practical activities and first-hand experiences
- Providing a meaningful context for Maths e.g. stories, role play, and real problems such as planning a party and cooking
- Making regular use of number rhymes and songs
- Developing children's use and understanding of mathematical language
- Providing opportunities to explore volume and capacity eg in sand and water play
- Providing opportunities to investigate shape, space and size eg in building and construction
- Looking for numbers, patterns and shapes in the environment
- Using and experimenting with numbers including numbers larger than 20
- Talking about numbers and using open-ended questions to encourage children's mathematical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Developing a sense of time through daily routines
- Developing positional language through small world play eg positioning furniture in the dolls' house or animals on the farm.

(vi) Understanding of the World

In this area of learning children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. This provides the foundation for later work in Science, History, Geography, RE, Design and Technology and Computing.

We offer specific lessons, taught by specialist subject leaders in Science (Young Investigators) and Forest School (Mini Foresters) and in addition offer regular cooking and gardening sessions.

We promote UW by:

- Providing first hand experiences that encourage children to explore, observe, predict, compare, solve problems, question, make decisions, discuss, think, use all of their senses
- Providing a wide range of activities, indoors and outside that stimulate children's interests and curiosity
- Promoting children's thought and investigation by asking open-ended

questions

- Encouraging the children to explore the immediate environment
- Developing geographical concepts, features and language through small world play eg model farm, road mats, making landscapes in the sand tray
- Recreating and exploring different aspects of the environment and the wider world through role play e.g. shops, post office, travel agent, hospital, vet
- Using water play to investigate floating and sinking, absorption, water power, bubbles ice etc
- Using sand play to compare the qualities of dry and wet sand
- Using paints, malleable materials and cooking to explore materials and observe changes
- Using construction toys, blocks and recyclable resources to develop D and T skills
- Using CD players, ipads, programmable toys and computers to develop computing skills
- Discussing the weather and seasonal changes
- Developing an understanding of a sense of time through daily routines
- Developing a sense of the past, present and future through discussion about events e.g. today we are doing this...yesterday we...tomorrow we will...
- Using photographs to compare, contrast, notice changes and sequence in chronological order e.g. photographs of the children now, as toddlers and as babies
- Using stories and role play to recreate life in a different time e.g. Cinderella's castle
- Using artifacts e.g. traditional toys, their baby toys, their parents' toys to get a sense of the past to compare and contrast
- Listening to older people's memories of their school days

(vii) Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, drama, role-play and imaginative play.

We offer specific sessions taught by specialist subject leaders in music and in early dance and drama.

We promote Expressive arts & Design by:

- Providing a stimulating environment
- Valuing children's creativity and original ideas
- Encouraging children to express themselves through art, music, dance, role play, drama, and imaginative play
- Encouraging imaginative play in a range of contexts eg role play, small world play, malleable materials, construction, sand and water play, puppets, story telling

- Providing a balance of adult-initiated and child-initiated activities
- Providing multi-sensory experiences
- Providing opportunities for children to explore colour, shape, texture and space
- Providing opportunities for children to enjoy and respond to music
- Providing a wide range of good quality materials with which children can explore and experiment
- Provide opportunities for children to experience and enjoy the artwork of others by exploring work by a range of artists and a variety of styles.
- Allowing sufficient time for children to explore and experiment, develop and refine ideas
- Helping children develop confidence in their own ideas and abilities
- Helping children become more independent in making choices, selecting resources and techniques, responding to stimuli.

4. Learning and Development Considerations

-If the teacher is worried about a child's progress in any area, this will be discussed with parents/carers to agree who the child will be supported. This may involve additional support and the school's Head of Learning support may be involved.

- For children whose home language is not English, the teacher will ensure that there are sufficient opportunities to learn and read a good standard of English.

- Abingdon Prep recognises that there are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning and adopts these in delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum:

- Playing and exploring - where 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.

5. Planning

Planning takes place collaboratively, where possible, between all staff involved with the class.

Long term planning is based on a two yearly cycle of loose topics, one per term
Medium term planning relates to one loose topic, is based on all 7 Areas of Learning and includes the learning objectives to be covered and examples of activities that may be provided. Children's ideas are also taken into account from discussion with the class at the end of the previous term. *Short term planning* consists of weekly phonics and maths plans. Experiences are planned for and led wherever possible, by the children and their personal development and lines of enquiry. Opportunity for both adult led and child led activities is

catered for in order to stimulate and enhance learning and progression. Key person knowledge will also provide additional information for assessment purposes.

The learning environment is organised both indoors and outdoors to encourage a positive attitude to learning. The children make their own selection of the activities on offer as this encourages independent learning.

6. Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is ongoing and is an integral part of the learning and development process. Monitoring of each child will take place through regular observations, discussion, photographs and planned assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. These are used to identify learning priorities and plan the next stages in the learning experiences for the child.

In Reception a wide range of evidence including photographs, examples of work or observations, in all seven areas of learning is collected and forms the basis of a child's Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This links with our online platform, Seesaw. This ensures that parents are kept up to date with learning and experiences and have the opportunity to comment. Parents have the opportunity to see their child's work over the course of the year. All of this evidence helps to inform our judgments as we build the final profile in the summer term. Outcomes are shared with the local authority in June each year. Close work with our Pre-Prep teaching team helps to ensure the moderation process is fair. We also have the opportunity to work with teachers from other local schools in order to share good practice and secure judgements on outcomes.

7. Reporting

There are two Parent-Teacher consultation evenings, one in the Autumn term and one in the Spring term. This time is used to detail progress and discuss children on an individual level. In the Summer term there is an invitation to come to a parent 'drop-in' in the final week, if parents require any extra guidance or support. If at any other time in the year the parent requests the learning evidence/profile of their child, these will be made available. Parents receive written reports detailing progress and/or targets at the end of the Autumn term and the Summer term. In term 1 (Autumn) the report offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning along with a specialist report from the Sport teacher. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs and gives details of the child's general progress. The final term (Summer) affords progress reports in each area of learning and notes whether a child is meeting

expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) in relation to the Early Learning Goals. It offers an overview of the characteristics each child demonstrates for their learning, along with a general comment and is also supported by full reports from the Sport/Swimming, ICT and Music departments. This report is also shared with the Year 1 teacher to ease the children's transition to the next phase of learning. The Head comments on each report over the year. Both of the reports go out in the penultimate week of the term, enabling parents to read and comment upon them.

8. The role of parents

We strongly believe that all parents have a crucial role to play in the education of their child. Parents are made to feel welcome and valued in their dealings with all members of staff.

We do this through:

- Inviting children and parents / carers to an initial transition day where they can become familiar with new environments and meet the team.
- Providing new parents/ carers with written information about the school class via the School Prospectus and Introduction to Reception literature
- Inviting all parents along to an online induction evening ahead of term starting
- New Parent Welcome event held at school at the end of the first week
- Inviting all parents along to a Phonics Open evening online within the first two weeks of the academic year.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress, including a review of their profile
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher (who is their key person) if there are any concerns. If needed a meeting will be set up between the staff and parent/carer so that any issues can be resolved quickly.
- Opportunities for parents to attend 'Open door' (workshare) sessions when they can view their child's work
- Opportunities to respond to reports both directly upon receipt and prior to parent teacher meeting
- Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- Offering a staggered start to the initial term in Reception. This takes shape over the course of two weeks, whereby children will have a graduated start to the full school day. Details will be discussed with parents/carers at the transition day.
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. At the start of every term, curriculum overviews will be made available on the website, informing parent/carers of the topics and areas of the curriculum to be covered and also any relevant information that may help the parent/carer of the child. There is also regular communication with home through the child's Reading Record diary and / or homework book. Weekly communications for parents can also be found via the online weekly mailing.

9. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the Foundation staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Governors are kept informed of development and progress within the EYFS during regular Governor meetings and an annual report. The Head and EYFS Coordinator carry out regular reviews and meetings discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

10. Information about the child

The school maintains a record of the following information for each child:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Name and address of every parent/carer who is known to the school.
- Information about any other person who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Which parent(s)/carer(s) the child normally lives with
- Emergency contact details for parents and/or carers. Where possible, the school will hold more than two emergency contact numbers for each child.

DSL EYFS and Deputy Head

Last internal review: September 2025

Last governor review: Lent Term 25

Next governor review: Lent Term 26

Appendix 1. Other Relevant Policies

Whilst all school policies relate to children in the EYFS, the following policies contain any statutory requirements from the EYFS Framework not otherwise set out in this policy:

Safeguarding policy (identifies the Designated Safeguarding Lead, action to be taken when there are concerns about a child, action to be taken in the event of an allegation made against a member of staff, safeguarding training, whistleblowing procedures for staff including when and how to report concerns and that such concerns will be taken seriously by the LT along with other channels open to staff where they feel unable to raise an issue or that their concern is not being addressed)

Safer Recruitment policy (suitable persons and disqualification, English and Maths skills required of staff to ensure the wellbeing of children in their care, requirement for the school to obtain a reference for any member of staff before they are recruited).

Attendance Policy (how absences (including for prolonged time) are followed up, how patterns and trends are monitored, how the attendance policy and procedures are communicated with parents)

Taking, Storing and Using images of Children policy and Mobile Technology policy (how mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting)

Staff Behaviour policy/Code of Conduct (staff taking medication/other substances, smoking and vaping)

Equal Opportunities policy (fair and equal treatment of employees)

Induction of New Staff policy (ensuring staff understand their roles and responsibilities)

First Aid policy (Paediatric First Aid requirements)

Health Illness and Medicines policy (medicines)

Nutrition policy (food and drink, supervision while eating, liaison with parents about dietary requirements, preferences, allergies, intolerances, special health requirements and development stage regarding solid foods and textures)

Pre-Prep Behaviour Policy (supporting and understanding children's behaviour)

Supervision policy (ratios, need for students/apprentices/trainees to have

Paediatric First Aid training for them to be included in ratios at the level below their level of study, balancing of privacy considerations and safeguarding when children use the toilet, supervision of pupils when eating by someone with relevant paediatric first aid qualification)

[SEND & Learning Support policy](#) (Special educational needs)

[Health and Safety policy](#) (accident or injury, safety of premises, indoor space requirements, risk assessment)

[Educational Visits/Uncollected child policy/Missing child policy/After School Club & Early Birds Policy](#) (organising premises for safeguarding, safety on outings)

[Admissions policy](#)

[Complaints Procedure](#) (complaints)

[Induction of New Staff Policy](#) (ensuring staff understand their roles and responsibilities)