



## Clophill St. Mary's VA CofE Lower School Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

### **Introduction:**

At Clophill St. Mary's CofE Lower School including Acorn Nursery, we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order for them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in their early years. A secure, safe and happy Early Years' experience therefore forms the basis for their future educational success. A strong partnership with parents will provide the foundation that children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

As children commence their journey at St. Mary's, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and of their environment. This is done through an embedded Christian Values education that underpins all life at St. Mary's and which all staff are committed to.

### **Aims:**

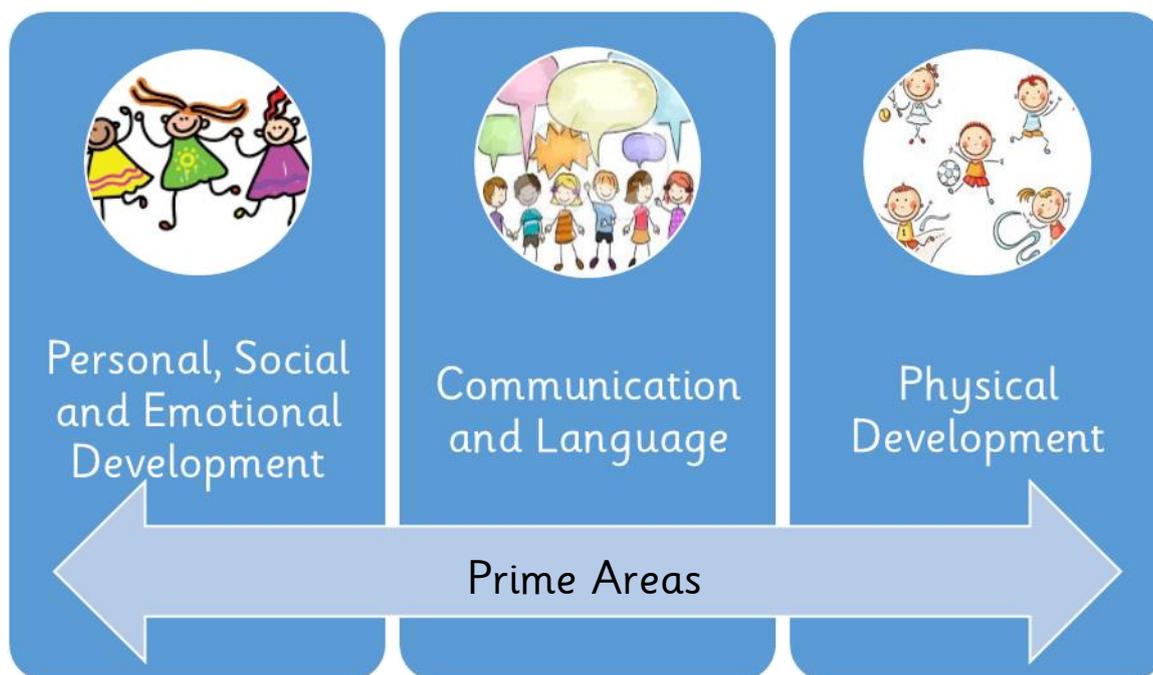
- To give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own experiences
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, spiritually, morally, physically, intellectually and emotionally
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, Christian, secure and friendly atmosphere
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as co-operation and sharing
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):**

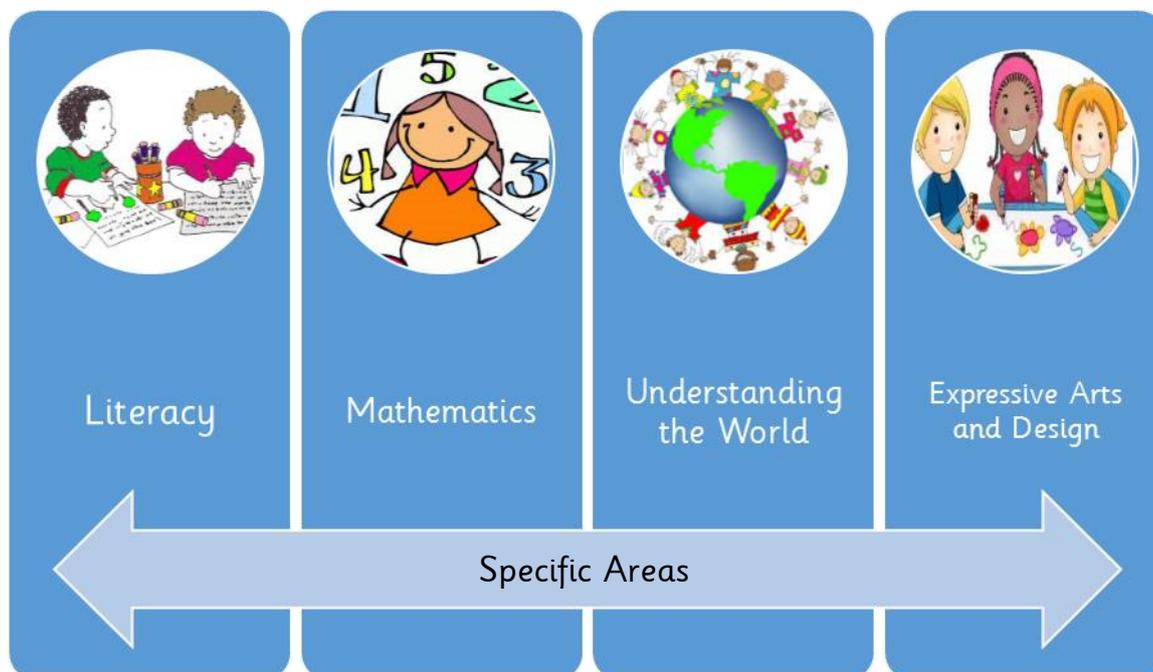
The EYFS principles, detailed in the Early Years Statutory Framework, guide the effective work of all staff in Acorn Nursery and Chestnut Reception classes at Clophill St. Mary's Lower School. These principles are grouped into four distinct, but complementary themes:

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
•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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.	•Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our EYFS curriculum. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The three Prime Areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.



We must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. Children cannot master the skills within the specific areas without first developing the prime areas.



Alongside and interconnected with the prime and specific areas detailed above, are the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These are the ways in which the child engages with other people and the environment. By observing and establishing rich opportunities for these characteristics of playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically; our staff are able to plan a provision to ensure maximum engagement and progress for all children. We link these to our St. Mary's Learning Power Super Heroes:

<p>Agent Concentration says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep on task</li> <li>• Focus on your task</li> <li>• Do one thing at a time</li> <li>• Break things down</li> <li>• Plan your work and think about it</li> <li>• Draw diagrams, jot down thoughts or things which help you think</li> </ul>	<p>Captain Perseverance says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work hard</li> <li>• Practise lots</li> <li>• Keep going</li> <li>• Try new strategies</li> <li>• Ask for help</li> <li>• Start again</li> <li>• Take a brain break</li> </ul>
<p>Chief Curiosity says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask questions</li> <li>• Notice things</li> <li>• Look for patterns and connections</li> <li>• Think of possible reasons</li> <li>• Research</li> <li>• Ask 'What if...?'</li> </ul>	<p>Doctor Improvement says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep reviewing your work</li> <li>• Identify your best bits</li> <li>• Improve one thing first</li> <li>• Try to be better than last time</li> <li>• Don't compare yourself to others, only yourself!</li> <li>• Take small steps</li> </ul>
<p>General 'Have-a-go' says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a growth mindset</li> <li>• Don't worry if it goes wrong</li> <li>• Learn from mistakes</li> <li>• Be excited to try new things</li> </ul>	<p>The Co-operation Dynamo says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to others</li> <li>• Say when you don't understand</li> <li>• Be kind when you disagree</li> <li>• Explain things to others</li> <li>• Be tolerant</li> </ul>
<p>The Enjoyment Crusader says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feel proud of your achievements</li> <li>• Feel your neurons connecting!</li> <li>• Imagine your intelligence growing by the minute!</li> <li>• Use what you have learnt in real life</li> <li>• Know you can do it if you have been taught and you practise</li> </ul>	<p>The Imagination Marvel says:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be creative</li> <li>• Let your imagination go</li> <li>• Think up new ideas and questions</li> </ul>

N.B. Not all the above phrases are shared with Acorn Nursery children in their Growth Mindset display.

#### Provision:

At Clophill St. Mary's CofE Lower School, we have our EYFS provision split over two buildings. Our Acorn Nursery building houses our 24 place pre-school and our main building is where you will find our 30 place Chestnut Reception class.

All of our staff work closely together to ensure a rich, high quality curriculum for all of our children. We value our parent partnership by having an open door policy, where parents and carers are able to bring their child into the setting and talk to staff if needed.

We also actively encourage parent contributions to our Tapestry system for observation and assessment (see below). In Acorn Nursery the children have a named key worker to ensure the welfare and learning potential of each child are met. Weekly meetings are held between the Nursery Manager and Reception class teacher, weekly meetings are held between Nursery staff and the Senior Leadership Team and regular planning meetings are held with all Nursery staff in order to promote planning that meets the needs and experiences for each child.

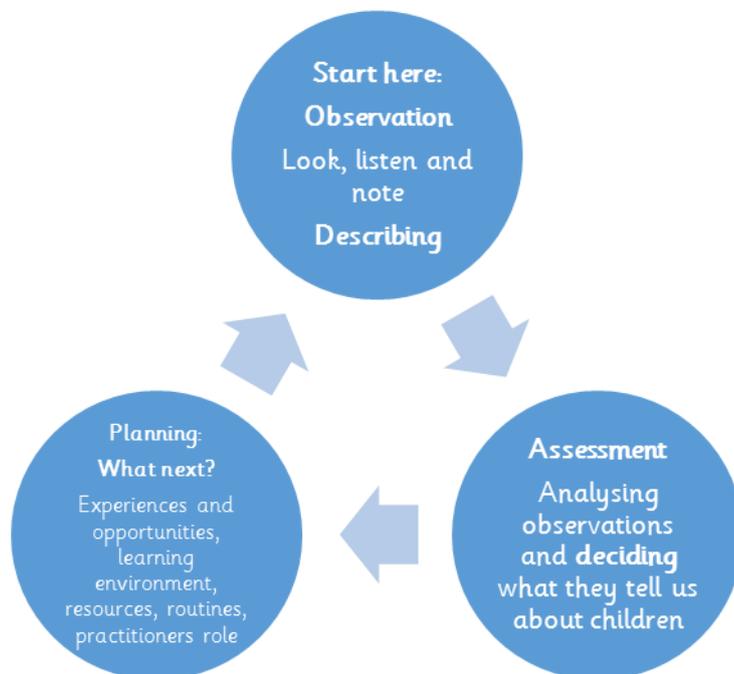
These meetings also ensure any required pupil support is deployed quickly and effectively and that all staff are kept up to date with school information including Health and Safety requirements.

Both Acorn Nursery and Chestnut Reception class have dedicated outdoor areas. For the majority of the day and in all weathers, the outdoor areas are available for the children to access. The opportunities outside also cover all areas of learning in the EYFS and provide stimulating opportunities that complement the teaching and learning inside.

We promote independence and school readiness in our children. We do this by establishing routines early so that children feel comfortable and confident during their time with us. Resources are clearly labelled, organised and accessible to children. Our children all feel confident to have a go and get involved without the fear of making mistakes.

### Observation, Planning and Assessment:

At Clophill St. Mary's CofE Lower School we hold the individual child at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and on-going formative assessment (assessment which takes place all of the time) is vital in effective Early Years pedagogy (the art of teaching). Staff achieve this by using a planning for learning cycle:



Assessment is an important part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves staff observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure that we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS, we use a range of strategies all of which come together to create a picture of each child as an individual learner. We use **Tapestry** on iPads to collate

observations and capture experiences for each child. (Please see the separate Learning Journey Policy for more information). Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team in informal meetings throughout the week and in regular formal meetings. These inform our planning for the next day and week ahead.

Parents have access to **Tapestry** through individual log-ins. They are also encouraged to contribute to information on **Tapestry**. This is so that significant events and learning at home can be recorded and included in the child's learning journey.

On entry to Acorn Nursery, we carry out baseline assessments for each child. This also occurs at the beginning of Chestnut Reception using the **Early Excellence** baseline assessment system. Throughout the Early Years the staff submit end of term assessment data to the Senior Leadership Team. This shows each child's development across the seven areas of learning.

At the end of Chestnut Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (as defined by the Department for Education) and comments on whether their development within each area is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'.

Whenever necessary children are provided with appropriate intervention and support strategies to ensure they can achieve their full potential.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with the children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning.

The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times, they will participate in a child's game, extending learning where possible.

By the Summer term in Chestnut Reception the children will experience many more adult directed tasks as they prepare for the transition to Birch class (Year One).

### **Play:**

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world.

They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children, as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions.

We believe that it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play, which is controlled, and adult led activities is very important to us.

### **Teaching:**

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in Acorn Nursery and Chestnut Reception classes to the remainder of the school. We set aside times each day when the children come

together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning; learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer and being able to concentrate.

Reading and story play are an important part of our day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories that they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always enough time for a class story at the end of the day, but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times throughout the day.

### **Planning:**

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. In the EYFS we have a two-year topic cycle that ensures all areas of the curriculum are covered within each of these topics. The topics are flexible to ensure we also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events. Every half term staff plan the next topic, this includes any visits or visitors that will enhance learning.

Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with the children to inform where the learning journey should move to. In Chestnut Reception the overview for the half term is sent home for parents to see. The EYFS plan as a team, with all staff invited to contribute through regular meetings, informal conversations and email.

### **Transition:**

Transitions are an integral part of the EYFS at Clophill St. Mary's CofE Lower School. Each child is supported in their transition in a number of ways.

Parents are offered school tours and an information evening (for those joining our Chestnut Reception class) that they can attend. Acorn Nursery offers 'Stay and Play' sessions for new parents and children and also facilitates bespoke settle sessions for every child.

All children starting Chestnut Reception are offered a home visit. This is an opportunity to meet staff and tell them all about your child's interests, needs and address any parental concerns. It is also exciting for the children to welcome staff into their home as staff will welcome them into school.

Children in Acorn Nursery moving up to Chestnut Reception have regular transition sessions to their new class throughout the Summer term (and sometimes earlier in the year) and children in Chestnut Reception have regular transition session into Year One during this term also, as well as taking part in the whole school transition day in July. If a child has additional needs, extra transition arrangements are facilitated.

As stated above, we also offer a Chestnut Reception parents information evening in the June before the children are due to start Reception. This gives further information on the school including routines and uniform. The evening is open to parents of Acorn Nursery children as well as parents whose children have not yet joined us.

### **Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Special Educational Needs:**

Our Early Years is taught in accordance with other school policies. Through our Christian worship and values, children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique and this is reflected in everyday practise, including during circle time, worship time, visitors, role play, books and positive images around the setting.

Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator (SENDCo), Mrs. Burraway, works very closely with EYFS staff to ensure any child requiring extra support to access the learning opportunities receives a clear programme of intervention which is shared and discussed with parents.

### **Admissions:**

Please see our separate Admissions Policies for Acorn Nursery and Clophill St. Mary's CofE Lower School.