

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September 2023

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Reception classes.

Aim

At Victoria Primary Academy we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

“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 grown up”.

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for education, 2021.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. At Victoria Primary Academy we use praise and encouragement, celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. At Victoria we develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.
- 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. Through observation we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The Reception learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and calm. The space is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. At Victoria Primary

Academy we build upon prior learning and experience through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/guardians, support staff and the teaching team work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Victoria Primary Academy we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability receive the best possible start to their primary education.
- Provide opportunities for children to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

Learning and Development

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, outlined by the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years' Foundation Stage" to enable the children to achieve, and learn beyond, the early learning goals.

Three of these 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:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World

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Expressive Arts and Design

At Victoria Primary Academy we believe these seven areas are equally important in order to promote the development of the 'whole child'. We aim to deliver all the areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they explore, think creatively and are active, developing positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, staff in the reception team interact to support, stretch and challenge children further.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between activities.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal "Special Book". In the Autumn and Spring terms, parents are invited to attend a parents' consultation evening.

Within the final term of Reception, we provide parents and carers with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning and parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Parents and Carers as Partners

We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care, striving to create and maintain partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning.

Our Induction Process / Transition

During the summer term, nursery children who will be starting school in September make informal visits to the reception class as part of the induction process.

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A parents meeting is held by the Head teacher and Reception staff in the Summer Term to introduce parents/guardians to the school and reception procedures. Through this meeting the academy's expectations and routines are communicated. The induction process and reception curriculum are also introduced.

Parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and to visit the reception classroom. Parents/ guardians are given a pack which will provide essential information and ideas for how they can support and prepare their child for starting school.

During the summer term, all prospective children are invited to visit the school for two sessions to allow them to become familiar with the environment and also the staff.

Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. Visits to local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further.

Reception staff visit each child in their home environment to introduce themselves and ensure they have accurate information to support a smooth induction to the academy.

During the induction period in September, children are split into two groups. They begin part-time sessions for several weeks before staying for lunch and then starting fulltime. These smaller groups allow:

- children to adjust and feel secure in their new environment
- the reception team to get to know the children individually and establish good relationships
- the reception teachers to carry out baseline assessments

Home/School Links

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and school staff work together in early years' settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining the school's expectations to parents/guardians during the new parents meeting in the summer term.
- Ensure that effective communication early in the Autumn term enables parents to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/guardians can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Encouraging relevant learning activities to be continued at home and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school.
- Discussing children's learning and progress with parents at parents' evenings.
- Encouraging children's success and achievements from home to be shared so they can be celebrated at school.
- Sending home a reading book and reading diary each week for the children to share with their parents / guardians.
- Inviting parents / guardians to attend phonics and mathematics workshops at the school to inform them of the learning that takes place throughout the year and to share ideas of activities that can be used to support their child at home.
- Inviting parents to events such as "Stay and Play", "Stay and Read" and theme day events to showcase learning.

Equal Opportunities

At Victoria Primary Academy we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. All our staff, as

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role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.