

## The Early Years Foundation Stage is changing

The purpose of this letter is:

- To help you to understand the curriculum we will be teaching in our setting.
- To understand the different ways in which we teach and your child will learn.
- To identify the key ways in which you can help your child at home and in School.

*Parent partnership is key; a two-way flow of information is essential.*

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.

### What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the stage of education for children from birth to the end of the Reception year. It is based on the recognition that children learn best through play and active learning. It is the same curriculum in Pre-Reception settings as it is in the Reception class in school. It has changed from September 2021.

There are seven areas of learning and development:

Prime areas:

- Communication and Language
- Personal Social and Emotional development
- Physical Development

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

There are 17 Early Learning Goals against which each child is assessed at the end of the Reception year.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The prime areas are important for building the foundations; it is through the specific areas that the primes are strengthened. There are also three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

These tell us about how each child learns not what they are learning. We look for things such as what engages or motivates a child, problem solving, resilience, changing strategy etc. Play is essential for children's development; it helps to build their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

The new curriculum gives us the opportunity to spend more time interacting and playing with the children. This means that we will not be completing as many written observations and completing paper learning journeys. This does mean however that we will know your children very well.

### **Developing children's language and vocabulary**

There is a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary. We will do this by:

- Providing a rich language environment where we have quality learning conversations and interactions with the children.
- Reading a range of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction texts.
  - Teaching new words and vocabulary.
- Modelling language that promotes thinking and challenges children, as well as adding language and new ideas.
- Offering open-ended questions to encourage more thinking and longer responses, e.g. "I wonder what would happen if...?"

### **What can you do to help your child?**

- Chat, play and read to and with them.
- Encourage them to be independent, e.g. use a knife and fork, dress themselves, zip up their coat, put their shoes on.
- Play board games with them.
- Engage in action rhymes, e.g. Row your Boat, Wheels on the Bus.

- Expand on your child's vocabulary by adding a word when in conversation, e.g. your child says "I've got a car" and you reply "yes, you have a red car."

### **Oral health**

Promoting oral health has been included in the EYFS. This is because good oral health habits need to be formed from the earliest age. Tooth decay is largely preventable, but it's still a serious problem among young children. We will promote oral health by talking about healthy foods and drinks that help to grow strong teeth, and those that do not. If you have any concerns regarding your child's oral health please speak to a member of staff.

Regards

Mrs Baker, Mrs Price and all the Early Years Team