



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Version Control

Version	Date	Description
1	Sept 2020	New Policy
2	Sept 2022	Review
3	Autumn24	Review Changes to Assessment in EYFS

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Review: Autumn 2026

Christian Vision at Alder Grove



Our vision for Alder Grove School is about the importance of roots. Just as a tree cannot grow to be healthy and strong without good roots, so we believe that children need the right conditions to grow and flourish.

Our school community at Alder Grove is rooted in the following values:

Kindness

Service

Truthfulness

Forgiveness

Courage

Perseverance

We see these values in the life of Jesus, and Christians choose to live their lives rooted in him. At Alder Grove, we want to help all our children, whatever their faith background, to grow deep roots which will enable them and the whole community to be strong and healthy learners, and to care for each other.

As we live out these values, we help each other to flourish and grow. Our vision is not just about individuals but about a whole community, so we emphasise the importance of serving each other, and treating each other as we would like to be treated, and we also believe in the importance of caring for the world around us.

When the roots are healthy, we will see fruit growing:

'They are like trees planted along the riverbank, bearing fruit each season' (Psalm 1.3).

The right roots will allow our children to fulfil their potential in all areas of life.

Description:

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's 'Teaching and Learning Policy' and is a statement of Alder Grove CofE School's intention for the Teaching and Learning of the Early Years Curriculum following the requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Early Learning Goals and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

Aims:

This Policy aims to clarify procedures for teaching and learning in the Early Years foundation Stage classes.

Introduction

At Alder Grove we aim:

- 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, individual experiences.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, 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, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation 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 Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive and support children's learning in all other areas. These areas of learning are known as the Prime areas. In Nursery classes in particular, the focus is very much on developing children's skills in the Prime areas.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding, Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling, Self Care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making Relationships, Managing Feelings and Behaviour, Self-confidence and Self-awareness

The Specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The Specific areas are:

- Literacy – Reading, Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers, Shape, Space and Measures
- Understanding the World – People and Communities, The World, Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and Using Media and Materials, Being Imaginative

Another important part of the EYFS curriculum is the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers should plan activities with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

- 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.

Teaching strategies

Teachers should ensure that there is a balance of Adult-led and Child-initiated activities across the day. When the children are choosing their own activities, the interaction between the 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 value, model, facilitate, demonstrate, question and extend what the child is doing.

Learning through play is an important part of the EYFS. The Keys Academy Trust believes that children in the EYFS learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Teachers should use children’s interests as a starting point from which to provide stimulating, active experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world.

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

Adult-led experiences should be carefully planned for every day to enable teachers to develop children’s specific skills and knowledge in each area of the curriculum. In Nursery these structured times should focus on the Prime Areas of development and early Literacy and Maths skills, as well as developing a love of music and stories. In Reception the Adult-led experiences should focus on all seven areas of the curriculum, and include a daily structured Phonics session and Maths session.

The EYFS curriculum should be enriched through a wide range of visitors, experiences and trips, such as meeting farm animals, drama workshops, parents sharing their cultural and religious celebrations, visits from police/firefighters/doctors, local walks, regular cooking activities, off site trips to farms/science centres.

Classroom organisation

The Early Years classrooms should have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure the children can access them easily. Both Nursery and Reception should be set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. Classrooms should have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, sand and water area, malleable play area, music area and outdoor area.

Planning

Staff should plan short thematic topics designed to inspire, fire the imagination and enthuse the children. Topics should be derived from children’s interests with the staff team working closely together to ensure planned activities closely meet the children’s needs. Planning will include Adult directed activities and enhancements to the continuous provision that the children can access during their Child-initiated activities. The children and staff should work together collaboratively to come up with creative ideas for how the continuous provision and role play area can be adapted for each topic.

In Reception, Phonics lessons should be planned and taught using the Read Write Inc programme, to develop children’s skills as rapidly as possible from their starting points on entry.

Children's progress will be monitored closely throughout the EYFS, enabling the staff to respond quickly to any gaps in skills or understanding through Adult Directed lessons that focus on particular areas of weakness. Individual and group support will be provided to help children make rapid progress with key skills.

Assessment

On entry to Nursery and Reception, the statutory baseline assessment will be carried out on each child.

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

At the end of the Reception year, class teachers must assess each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and report to the Local Authority on whether their development within each ELG is either 'Emerging' or 'Expected'. This information will be communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and shared with Year 1 teachers in handover meetings.

Partnership with parents and carers

The Keys Academy Trust believes that the involvement of parents and carers in a child's education is vital and therefore staff should work very closely with parents and carers to ensure they are involved in their child's education. Staff should offer an open door policy where parents and carers are always welcome to discuss any queries or concerns.

A well planned transition process should be in place to support children joining the Nursery and Reception classes. Nursery children should receive home visits, attend Stay and Play sessions with their parents and then be offered a short unaccompanied visit before starting Nursery. Children joining Reception will be visited in their current Nursery by their new teacher and invited to two school visits to meet their class and teacher. Parents will be invited to an information evening and tour of the school and Reception classrooms. All pupils should receive information packs before starting.

Once the children are part of the school we offer many ways for parents to be involved in and support their child's learning. These include:

- weekly home/school books with activities to follow up what the children have been doing
- weekly reading books
- parent workshops
- parents' evenings
- weekly plans displayed for the parents to read
- school newsletter
- parents invited to share experiences with the class such as a new baby, Diwali celebrations, their job role as a doctor/nurse/police officer
- opportunities to help with cooking, reading stories, library visits, local walks and school trips
- stay and play sessions