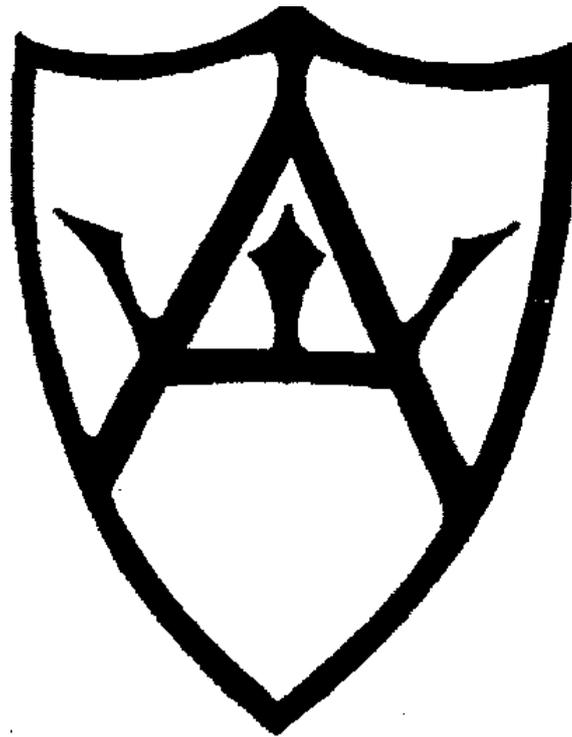


# Alfriston School



# Early Years Policy

Approved: January 2023

Next Review: January 2026



ALFRISTON SCHOOL 'Fair, Friendly, Fulfilling & Fun!'

### Our Curriculum Intent



#### Collaborative Bee

Our curriculum and wider school community provide opportunities for us to work together and learn from each other in a supportive environment.

We model effective communication and teach coaching skills to enable children to recognise their own needs and those of others.

#### VISION

We have high aspirations for all of our children to be happy, confident, responsible and knowledgeable individuals who can learn at their best. We delight in equipping all children to achieve personal success and develop a lifelong love of learning.



#### Curious Meerkat

Our curriculum is designed to enable children to become critical thinkers and develop a thirst for new experiences.

We encourage children to develop their questioning skills in order to build on prior learning and deepen their knowledge.



#### Creative Spider

We have a diverse and creative curriculum, providing a wide range of first hand experiences and extra-curricular activities. We celebrate the individuality of all our learners, giving them the confidence to express themselves. We provide a safe and supportive environment in which they can find different ways to deepen their learning.



#### Independent Cat

Through our curriculum, we provide opportunities for all children to be independent learners with high aspirations. Pupils of all abilities and social backgrounds are given the opportunity to achieve. Every child is recognised as a unique individual.



#### Determined Tortoise

Our curriculum provides breadth, depth and challenge. We model the importance of resilience, encouraging children to embrace mistakes as part of learning and development. We motivate each child to believe that they can persevere in order to meet their own potential.

**Kind Hands**

**Kind Feet**

**Kind Words**

**Kind Everything**

### Introduction

'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 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 provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Education 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Alfriston School, children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday.

At Alfriston School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We believe that early childhood is a unique phase in a child's life and we view it as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Through this policy we aim to ensure a consistent approach where parents, carers and teachers work together to give children the best possible start.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

‘The Early Years Foundation Stage is the statutory framework which sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future progress through school and life.’

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Education 2021

Children in the EYFS at Alfriston School work within this framework.

The framework details four key principles which guide our practice at Alfriston:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

#### **A Unique Child**

The diversity of individuals is respected and no child or family is discriminated against. Children are given clear boundaries, but they are encouraged to make choices to help them develop their sense of self. We aim to identify and provide for any needs as early as possible, considering factors such as maturity and family circumstances. We integrate all children and aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. Any additional needs are met through providing appropriate resources and learning opportunities as well as additional adult support.

#### **Inclusion**

In Reception, we set realistic yet challenging next steps that meet the needs of individual children so that they make good progress from their starting points. We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend all children’s knowledge and skills;
- Using multi-sensory teaching strategies;
- Linking learning to interests to develop confidence and self-esteem;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Monitoring progress and providing individual support as necessary;
- Working in partnership with pre-schools, parents/carers, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and outside agencies to identify and/or support specific needs in order to effectively support the development of the child.

Please refer to the SEND policy and Equality Policy for further details.

## **Safeguarding**

At Alfriston School, safeguarding is a top priority and we take all necessary steps to keep children healthy, safe and secure so children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

Please refer to these policies for further details:

Recruitment and Selection Policy

Online Safety Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Attendance Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Behaviour Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy

First Aid Policy

Intimate Care Policy

## **Positive Relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent from secure, trusting relationships with adults. We aim to develop caring and respectful relationships with children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and ongoing educators and we value the contribution they make. We foster positive relationships with parents by:

- Inviting all parents/ carers to a welcome meeting during the summer term before their child starts school;
- Providing a comprehensive transition and settling in process. In September we offer a half an hour home/school meeting to ascertain the child's individual needs and interests. Children have a gentle entry into school over a three-day period with close contact with parents throughout;
- Inviting all parents/carers to a curriculum meeting, at the start of term, to discuss learning in class and supporting at home;
- Providing parents/carers with the opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development at home;
- Providing a weekly home learning menu detailing children's learning for the week;
- Inviting parents/carers into the classroom weekly as an informal opportunity to look at their child's learning journey;

- Inviting parents/carers to attend two scheduled parent consultation meetings, where parents are given feedback outlining their child's achievements and next steps. Resources are provided for parents/carers to help support their child's next steps at home. Parents/carers are also invited to respond in writing to their child's learning journey;
- Providing parents/carers with a report on their child's attainment and progress mid-year and at the end of Reception;
- Offering an 'open door' policy where parents/ carers can meet individually and promptly with school staff to discuss any concerns;
- Actively seeking parental involvement in many other ways joining us on outings and becoming part of the 'Friends of Alfriston School'.

### **Transition**

Alfriston School has strong links with many pre-schools and nurseries in the locality. We aim to visit all children who will be attending our school from these settings in the summer term before school entry in September. Pre-schools/Nurseries all complete a summative transition record so we are aware of children's developmental stage and learning styles. All children have two opportunities to visit Alfriston School for 'stay and play' sessions in the summer term.

In their last term of the Early Years Foundation Stage, the children will be given opportunities to meet their KS1 teacher, and the other children who will make up this class, on a more formal basis. The Early Years Foundation Stage and KS1 teachers work closely together throughout the year and regularly discuss the individual profiles of the children in order to provide continuity into Year 1.

### **Enabling Environments**

The environment plays a key role in developing the child. At Alfriston School, we aim to create an attractive and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environment where children feel safe, happy and challenged. We plan for children to have access to learning opportunities that promote all areas of learning.

### **Learning and Development**

At Alfriston School we know that children learn in different ways and at different rates. We help all children make progress towards the knowledge, skills and understanding they should have by the end of the year by ensuring that learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning.

### **Curriculum**

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are 'prime areas' and four are 'specific areas'.

#### **Prime Areas:**

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

**Specific Areas:**

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

The Prime Areas are essential for fostering early learning skills, forming relationships and thriving. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in the specific areas of learning. The areas are equally important and depend on each other to develop a child's full potential. Across all areas of learning and development we promote the three characteristics of effective learning:

- **Playing and exploring**

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world. They initiate activities and are willing to have a go.

- **Active learning**

This is typically when children are motivated and interested and they have some control over their learning. They develop a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creativity and thinking critically**

Adults support children's thinking and help them to make links and connections in their learning by asking open ended questions and allowing them to access resources and extend their learning.

A yearly curriculum cycle is in place detailing potential knowledge and skills development in every area of learning. Weekly planning ensures current observed needs are developed in each area through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-focussed and child-initiated activities where children are encouraged to develop ideas, concepts and skills. Weekly planning is also responsive to current interests for children, where applicable.

**Phonics**

Children follow the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' phonic programme. Children have daily phonics sessions following this scheme from their first full week in school. Children are offered daily opportunities to engage in adult-focussed, interactive experiences that promote phonological awareness and key skills for reading and spelling. This programme continues throughout Reception and into Year 1.

**Home Learning**

At Alfriston School, we believe that home learning is a vital addition to a child's learning. Regular reading is encouraged at home and this should be recorded in the reading diary. A weekly learning menu is sent home detailing children's learning and further ideas to support learning at home.

**Assessment**

'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support.'

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Department for Education 2021

The Development Matters documentation and Early Learning Goals (ELG) provide the basis for assessment throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children are quickly assessed at their entry point to Reception to establish a baseline.

Teachers and teaching assistants make regular assessments of children's learning in the environment and these high-quality observations are an integral part of the learning and development process. Next steps are planned in response to these observations. All staff have an awareness of each child's next steps and are mindful of this when interacting with the children.

Progress is monitored and tracked consistently throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure each child makes good progress. The class teacher submits baseline and end of term 2, 4 and 6 assessment data to the headteacher showing each child's progress and attainment across the seven areas of learning towards the ELGs. In the final term of Reception, the EYFS profile is completed for each child with a well-rounded picture of the child's knowledge, understanding and abilities; their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1. Results are shared with parents/carers, the Year 1 teacher and the local authority.

In order to ensure accuracy of judgements, the class teacher attends external statutory moderation events led by the local authority and other external moderation events led by the local Early Years hub and the locality school alliance group. Internal moderation takes place across the year with Alfriston School staff.

### **Monitoring**

The Headteacher and subject leaders undertake monitoring of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum and a named governor has responsibility for the Early Years Foundation Stage.