Aldrington CE Primary School
EARLY LEARNING
A POLICY GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Introduction

This policy guide outlines the purpose, nature and management of early learning in our Reception for parents and families. A full copy of our Early Years Policy may be seen upon request.

Reception at Aldrington

- Our Reception children have their own playground and entrance.
- In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, fruit is provided daily during the morning. Milk is provided free for all 4 year olds and then can be bought through the school milk scheme, when they turn 5 (for more information, please see: https://aldrington.org/Lunch-Menu). Water should be brought to school in a named bottle.
- To encourage independence, Reception children wear polo shirts and tracksuit bottoms/shorts rather than shirt and tie. Please see the Uniform Policy for full details of the uniform.
- At Aldrington, children learn to read following the 'Little Wandle' phonics programme. You can find out more at https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents

Principles of Early Years Education and their implications

- For effective learning to take place, young children need to feel included, secure and valued in their environment. We aim to promote this by developing a partnership with families and by being sensitive to each child's needs.
- Young children have specific needs, therefore, this stage of school is unique and important in its own right and needs to be planned for accordingly. Our curriculum and planning is specifically designed for our Reception Classes.
- Early years experiences should build on what children already know and can do. We make use of information from pre-school groups and families in our planning.
- Young children are seen as individuals and learning is differentiated so as to motivate children to progress at their own level.
- Young children are generally active and spontaneous learners. We, therefore, plan a range of first hand experiences, stimulating a range of senses.
- Children learn naturally about themselves, others and the world around them through structured play. Play is not seen as something that is done after work is finished.

Organisation and Management of Learning

- In the classroom, children may work individually or in groups. Grouping may be determined by friendship or to enable children to work at the same aspect of their learning together. Group size will also vary depending upon the activity.
- During a typical session, there will be a mixture of 'carpet-times' (teaching to a larger group or class), focused adult-led activities with smaller groups and independent child-initiated activities.
- Play opportunities are planned to reinforce, practise and extend skills, knowledge and attitudes.
- Opportunities and activities provided for children are planned to be immersive, engaging and fun. Children may not realise they are learning!

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage is for children aged 0-5. It continues to the end of the Reception Year. It is organised into a progressive series of 'Development Matters' that identify what children need to learn in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The Curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into three 'prime' and four 'specific' areas of learning, although children's learning often encompasses more than one area at any time. The areas are:

Prime areas – vital to development of the specific areas:

- Communication and Language
  - Listening, Attention and Understanding, Speaking
- Physical Development
  - Gross Motor Skills, Fine Motor Skills
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
  - Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships

Specific areas – skills and knowledge, dependent on the Prime areas:

- Literacy
  - Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing
- Mathematics
  - Number, Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the world
  - Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities, The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design
  - Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive

Curriculum planning is based on the Foundation Stage Early Learning Goals and continues the curriculum provided by pre-school groups.

Planning, Assessment and Recording

Learning experiences in the Early Years are planned for thoroughly, but there is flexibility to allow for children's interests, and events that arise spontaneously.

Much of our observation and assessment of the children is undertaken by working alongside them across a wide range of experiences. From this, we hope to get to know how each child is developing and plan for future learning.

This information is shared with you through informal daily contact, a parents' evening in the autumn and spring terms and an end of year report.

Parents and families

When families and teachers work together in the early years setting, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. At Aldrington, a successful partnership between home and school is fostered in several ways by:

- Meeting with families prior to children starting school to discuss their child's development, as well as at termly parents meetings.
- Being available at the school gates at the start and end of each school day for general messages. Meetings with class teachers can also be arranged by appointment.
- Having an induction or 'settling in' period to give time for each child to become secure in their surroundings.
- Providing information for families on how learning is planned and organised within the classroom. There are weekly 'learning letters' via SchoolPing and a termly 'curriculum letter'. These provide examples of activities that can be used at home to consolidate learning at school.
- Encouraging families to be involved in a variety of ways such as accompanying trips or reading with children.

Home Learning

At Aldrington, we believe children benefit most when teachers and families work in partnership, encouraging children to make the most of learning opportunities both at home and at school. In Reception, no formal homework is set but, as for the rest of the school, children are expected to read at home regularly (approximately 10 – 15 minutes daily) and to talk about books with an adult at home to develop language and comprehension. For children in Reception, this may be storytime or shared reading of a library book, as well as time for children to practise their own reading using books brought home from school. These books are chosen to suit each child's current level of confidence and fluency. We also ask that children practise the letters and sounds they have been learning in school – as sent home on weekly Learning Letters. For further details please see the school's Home Learning Policy.