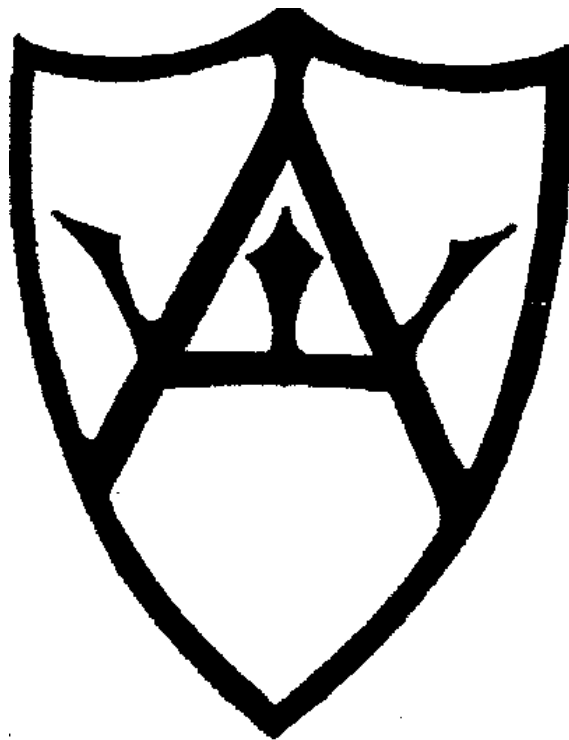


Alfriston School



Early Years Policy

January 2025

Next Review: January 2026



OUR VISION – CURRICULUM INTENT

We have high aspirations for all of our children to be safe, happy, confident, responsible and knowledgeable individuals who can learn at their best.

We delight in equipping all children to achieve personal success, make meaningful connections and develop a lifelong love of learning. Every child feels valued and cared for – they have a sense of belonging and are proud of their achievements.

Our curriculum not only uses our beautiful location to enrich the learning of our children but is also outward looking so that they are respectful global citizens.

'Fair, Friendly, Fulfilling & Fun!'

ALFRISTON SCHOOL



Life Value: 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.



Life Value: 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.



Life Value: 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.

**Kind Hands
Kind Feet
Kind Words
Kind Everything**



Life Value: 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.



Life Value: 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.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 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 Education (EYFS) is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. The provision at Alfriston Primary School is based on the understanding that children learn best when they learn through a means of making connections, through play and adult interaction. Planning is developed that allows for rich child-initiated learning, alongside well-planned and highly intentional adult-directed learning experiences.

The EYFS is based on four guiding principles:

A Unique Child - we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, positive reinforcement, good role models as well as celebration and sharing assemblies, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude and love of learning. We value the diversity of individuals within our schools and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

Positive Relationships - we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, and their future role, in educating their child(ren).

Enabling Environments - the EYFS 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 rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Stage has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Learning and Development - we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum are three Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

Active learning – children concentrate and keep 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.

The EYFS 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.

Planning, Implementation and Play

Throughout the EYFS we plan activities to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum and lifelong learning. Teaching and learning will take place within the classroom, outside areas and in the local area. Within these areas children will participate in a variety of activities, both with an adult and independently.

We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Play can be enjoyed and challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the Prime and Specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, guidance and directed teaching, children will be able to:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world;
- Practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills;
- Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules;
- Be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk to rehearse their feelings;
- Take risks and make mistakes;
- Think creatively and imaginatively;
- Communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems;
- Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Adults in the setting will support play and learning by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment;
- Supporting children's learning through planned play and directed teaching;
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play;
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play;
- Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning;
- Narrating children's play;
- Exposing children to a wide range of stories, poems and genres of text;
- Encouraging children to use a range of vocabulary;
- Asking questions about children's play.

Each child is viewed as an individual, with specific needs being met in appropriate ways, according to their stage of development. Individuality is encouraged, independence is fostered, and each child is encouraged to achieve their best.

Adults will be aware of the importance language and vocabulary has on children's development and keep this in the forefront of their minds.

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.

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

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;
- 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 and carer involvement in many other ways, for example, 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.

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

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 planning for and 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 statutory moderation events led by the local authority and other external moderation events led by the local Early Years hub and the local school alliance group. Internal moderation also 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.