



Tilstock[†]
Part of the Marches Academy Trust 



Our Early Years provision

1. Principles

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. (DfE, 2014)

At Tilstock CE Primary School we strive to meet every child's entitlement to develop a love of learning that will enable them to have the best possible start to their education and achieve their full potential.

The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage states four guiding principles which should shape practice in the early years. These are:

- *Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured;*
- *Children can be strong and independent through positive relationships;*
- *Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and /or carers; and children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.*
- *The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities; (Statutory framework, March 2014)*

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment underpin learning and development across all areas. Adults and the considered use of the environment support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

2. Aims

At Tilstock CE Nursery, we aim to provide every child with the skills to become a happy, independent and curious life-long learner. Our priority is that our provision provides a high level of engagement and active learning through a range of skill based activities, real life contexts, child interests and the whole environment, including the local community. As a Church school our Christian values are embedded throughout our curriculum and in everything we do. Our team consists of experienced teachers who are skilled in early years teaching. They understand the needs of the young child and how best to create an environment to enable a love of learning. Everyone works towards the same goal: to ensure every child achieves to their highest ability through learning through play and enjoyment.

3. Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

And four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the characteristics of effective learning:

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

Our EYFS Curriculum

- is at the heart of our learning journey approach
- is distinctive, innovative and strategically planned
- is reviewed in the light of national developments, new thinking and research and development
- includes a balance of child-led and adult-led learning within a child centred approach
- includes a daily high quality phonics provision to ensure a firm foundation for early reading and writing
- introduces challenging, engaging and real life problems with the involvement of the local community and environment
- ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning at every stage of development and every area of the EYFS curriculum

The Enabling Environment

At Tilstock, we believe that a truly enabling environment changes and develops along with the child.

Darwin classroom areas are carefully planned to ensure all areas are used to enable learning for every child. Our basic provision is linked to the age related expectations of the cohort. Appropriate resources in the EYFS environment are stimulating and relevant.

We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves! We support children's learning through a balance of child-initiated or adult-led activities (such as phonics or number sessions). We encourage child initiated activities and adapt our continuous provision accordingly throughout the year.

In child initiated activities, the children have the choice of where and how they choose to learn. All activities and resources are based upon current assessment and all have a main learning intention that can be accessed with and without adult support.

Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. We enhance our provision through objects, prompts, conversation and questioning. The learning environment is divided into different zones, such as a Writing area and Arts area, in order to fully support all seven areas of learning.

We believe that the outdoors environment is a vital part of children's daily learning and we strive to ensure that all elements of the EYFS are reflected in our outdoor areas including a forest school area and garden, whereby children can learn through real-life contexts, responsibility and care.

4. Planning

At Tilstock, we believe good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. We use the development statements in *Development Matters (DfE 2012)* to identify next steps for each child to deepen, challenge and extend their learning.

During weekly planning sessions, discussion takes place to ensure activities allow for the characteristics of effective learning to be demonstrated and embedded. Our planning builds on and extends what children know and can do. It shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. All staff who work in the EYFS class at Tilstock are involved in this process.

Child-initiated activities may be instigated when the child brings something to the setting this might lead to the provision of resources, stories and pictures to support this interest.

Planning takes into account children with individual needs in line with the SEN policy.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

1. **Long Term Planning:** We have created a framework, which gives structure and coherence to the curriculum. Topics are planned for each of the six terms and the early learning goals and educational programmes are distributed over the terms, to determine broad and balanced coverage.
2. **Medium Term Planning:** We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. We include links between areas of learning and development and opportunities for real-life contexts and local learning. A whole school focus or theme is linked to activities within the EYFS setting.
3. **Short Term Planning:** We identify specific learning objectives and plan activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis.

These are adapted continuously to meet the needs of the unique child. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

5. Assessment

Formative Assessment: On-going formative assessment is at the heart of our effective early years practice. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of long, short and photographic observations and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. We currently use the ***Tapestry EYFS assessment tracker*** to capture these assessments. A baseline assessment is carried out in the first few weeks of entry. This assessment informs the cohort's emotional needs, as well as academic attainment at point of entry. This information is analysed within our EYFS team as well as being shared with SLT.

Summative assessment: At the end of the Reception year the EYFS Profile is completed which provides information of a child's knowledge, understanding and their progress. The Profile reflects the on-going observations and assessments which have been made during the year. Evaluations are made in each of the 7 areas of learning, assessing against the early learning goals criteria. Each child will be assessed as either 'meeting expected levels', 'exceeding expected levels' or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging) in each of the 7 areas of learning

We ensure our end of EYFS assessments are reliable through:-

- Our knowledge of the child gained through observation and interaction
- Our environment enables the child to flourish to their full capacity
- Our assessments ensure a range of contributors e.g. parents, outside agencies (e.g. Speech and Language therapists) and any other relevant adults
- Moderation with other local schools
- The Senior Leadership Team monitor teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage throughout the year and analyse the EYFS Profile data. There is also a specific EYFS Governor who monitors EYFS across the year.

Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher twice a year in a formal parents meeting and receive a written report on their child's achievements and their Early Learning Goal achievements at the end of the Summer term. More informally we meet with parents throughout the school year as and when necessary to discuss their child particular needs.

6. Transition to Tilstock CE Primary School

Planning for a smooth and thorough transition starts as soon as possible and well in advance of the September start date. We endeavour to build new relationships with pre-school children that are new to our school. To ensure the best possible transition we:-

- Offer weekly 'stay and play' sessions for pre-schoolers with their parents, grandparents and carers, to develop relationships with staff and children.
- Visit as many pre-schools/nurseries as possible to meet children in a familiar setting
- Share important information about our school during new-parents meeting (July)
- Use written information sent by pre-schools/nurseries to inform early planning
- Hold a series of 'taster' sessions for parents and children in July
- Share information in a transition meeting with key adults for children with additional needs
- Meet with every parent and child before beginning school to share important information from home and school

For transition between Reception and Year 1

- Reception teachers plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- An EYFS Profile/Characteristics of Effective Learning is passed on to the Year 1 teacher
- There is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when the children move into Year 1
- The 'Read Write Inc' approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout Year 1 and 2

7. Working in partnership

We understand the benefits and positive impact that working in partnership has on the effectiveness of our EYFS setting. We value our partnerships and endeavour to actively maintain these by sharing information, ideas, expertise and our knowledge within our team and with parents, carers, colleagues and other professionals.

Within our role of enabling partnerships we:-

- Meet weekly with EYFS team to discuss assessments, planning, individual children, research
- Hold regular parent workshops on relevant areas of their children's development e.g. maths, reading, phonics
- Encouraging relevant learning tasks to be continued at home, to ensure that experiences at home are used to develop learning in the school
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- Work with the local community to develop learning opportunities within the curriculum