



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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This policy applies to all stakeholders within Ivel Valley School & College



Introduction

This policy sets out the Ivel Valley School & College approach to Early Years education, including the fundamental principles that underpin the curriculum in Early Years and Key Stage 1. This policy is based on requirements set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

The purpose of this policy

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes the best possible progress
- Close partnership working between practitioners, other professionals and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

The aims of EYFS at Ivel Valley

In the EYFS department at Ivel Valley we aim to:

- Provide quality learning experiences for all the children. Learning will be through planned play and practical activities.
- Provide a dedicated space which is child friendly and includes rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching. This is supported through stimulating resources and supported risk taking.
- Teach the foundations of future learning, these are: tolerance, communication skills, building relationships, problem solving, early maths and literacy, phonics, self-care and independence.
- Provide a child-initiated curriculum that takes account of developmental needs and allows progression – starting and ending with the child.
- Create motivated and effective learners by supporting children to engage with people and the environment by playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.
- Work in partnership with families and wider professionals to support the progress and development of the children.

Transition into Ivel Valley

Before the children start at the school, a personalised admission process takes place which includes:

- a virtual meeting with their parents/carers, their previous setting and/or the Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Advisory Team
- a home visit with their new class teacher and their keyworker.
- discussion between school and other professionals involved such as physiotherapists, Speech and Language Therapists and nurses.
- a presentation for families about the school and systems such as ordering lunches and school uniform



- a transition booklet.
- a short video posted on class dojo introducing the teacher, teaching assistants and the learning environment.
- a flexible settling in programme to suit each child's individual needs

All children are given the opportunity to attend for either a half day or full day according to their age and individual needs. The ultimate aim is for all children to attend full time unless there are exceptional reasons why this may not be possible.

Curriculum

We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which promotes children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development within a safe, secure and stimulating environment. The curriculum in Early Years and Key Stage 1 is rooted in the 'learning through play' philosophy, see 'Approaches to Learning' section below.

Our curriculum is determined by the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework. Ivel Valley's curriculum is carefully sequenced, beginning in the EYFS and continuing to the end of Key Stage 5 (for more curriculum information, refer to the Ivel Valley website). In the Early Years department, we cover the prime and specific areas of learning as listed below:

- Prime areas - these areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.
- Personal, Emotional and Social Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Life and Living Skills
- Specific areas - these include essential skills and knowledge and provide important contexts for learning.
- Literacy
- Maths
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts & Design

Approaches to Learning

Play is a fundamental part of the way that children learn. We believe that learning through play remains developmentally appropriate throughout Early Years, Key Stage 1 and beyond.

Children develop their knowledge and understanding in both prime and specific areas by learning through play. Play opportunities are carefully planned and supported by skillful staff in order to support children's learning. Pupils' development is observed by staff and suitable scaffolding provided to take them towards their next step.



Executive function skills help children manage their thoughts, actions, and emotions. We support this development through:

- **Playing and exploring – developing mental flexibility**
Encouraging curiosity and imaginative play helps children adapt to new situations and try different ways of doing things.
- **Active learning – strengthening the ability to focus attention**
Helping children stay engaged and keep trying builds their ability to concentrate, ignore distractions, and complete tasks.
- **Creating and thinking critically – building working memory**
Encouraging children to plan, make connections, and test ideas helps them remember and use information effectively.

By developing these skills, we support children to become independent, confident, and resilient learners.

In Early Years, a variety of teaching approaches and styles are used to support the children's learning and their developmental needs. During group Attention Autism sessions, the children are improving their focus, attention and turn taking skills. All sessions are highly engaging and exciting, offering the children an irresistible opportunity to learn. Intensive Interaction is a 1:1 session focusing on the Fundamentals of Communication, such as enjoying being with another person, using eye contact and taking turns in conversations.

Our continuous provision areas enable the children to access core resources that are interesting yet familiar to them in defined spaces such as the sensory tuff trays and reading corners.

In Early Years we teach pre-phonics and early reading skills through activities that build and develop each pupil's visual discrimination and memory. This process may take time and involves pupils engaging in multiple multisensory encounters in order to embed this knowledge and be ready to move onto formal phonics sessions. Once children have mastered these pre-reading and writing skills, they are assessed and then move on to accessing formal, synthetic phonics sessions. At Ivel Valley, we use the Sounds-Write phonics scheme across the whole setting.

Physical Development is also a big part of the day in Early Years which includes weekly access to Forest School sessions, PE sessions and regular access to physical activities both inside and outside the classroom. The outdoor space is used to take learning outside whenever possible and structured curriculum areas are set up outside on a daily basis.

Planning, Recording and Assessment

Teachers ensure that planning is in place for each of the following areas:

- **Topic planning:** Topics are planned on a three-year rolling programme to ensure breadth of experience. However, planning remains flexible enough to take children's strengths, areas of need and interests into account.



Continuous provision: Activities that are available to every child every day and form key elements of what is provided in Early Years and Key Stage 1, for example, construction toys or sand and water play.

Enhancements: Additional resources or activities added to the continuous provision relating to the topic and considering children's interests. Enhancements will be carefully planned in order to engage pupils and provide opportunities for them to work toward their targets.

Teacher-led sessions: Throughout the day there are 3 whole class / group teaching times followed by small group or 1:1 sessions planned and delivered by teachers (occasionally HLTAs / Level 3 TAs) and based on prior assessment.

Teachers conduct a baseline assessment against the Ivel Valley curriculum within the first six weeks of joining Ivel Valley. We also complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) for pupils where it is appropriate; however, for some children, due to their individual needs, the assessment may not be relevant and they will be disapplied in line with statutory guidance. Assessment is then completed regularly and accurately for every child in their class using the Ivel Valley framework.

Assessment is conducted during small group sessions and through observations by teachers and teaching assistants. The platform Evidence for Learning is used to record pupils' learning and to collate assessment data. This is also used to record observations in relation to the Engagement Model, which supports effective teaching and learning for pupils with complex learning difficulties and disabilities. It allows teachers and leaders to focus on the pupil's engagement as a learner and create personalised learning pathways. All assessment is fed back into teachers' planning. Assessment information will be shared with parents at Annual Review meetings and they will also have ongoing access to their child's 'learning journey', made up of learning observations recorded on Evidence for Learning. At the end of the Reception year, we complete the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile for each child, assessing their development against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

Pupils' development is also tracked through their progress towards their EHCP long term and short-term outcomes. These are decided upon at Annual Review meetings, in a collaborative process with teachers, senior leaders, parents/carers, other professionals and where appropriate, the pupils themselves.

Working with parents and carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents / carers. All staff work closely with parents / carers to ensure strategies are embedded both at school and at home. Key workers are assigned to every child in the EYFS at Ivel Valley with the teacher retaining oversight of all key workers and ultimate responsibility for the welfare and progress of all pupils. Parents / carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through access to their child's learning journey, consultation evenings and EHCP meetings annually (or every six months when a pupil is under five years of age). In addition, teachers use Class Dojo to engage in



two-way communication with parents and carers on a daily basis and to share what pupils will be learning in school. Families are invited into school to attend events such as coffee mornings and stay and play sessions. Teachers and key workers collaborate with other professionals (including, but not limited to, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists and physiotherapists) to ensure the best possible progress for all pupils in the EYFS departments.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring there is a comprehensive and rigorous policy in place to safeguard children.
- Ensuring there is a policy in place in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff (including supply staff) or a volunteer.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all related policies.
- Ensuring that this policy does not discriminate on any grounds.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Holding the Headteacher accountable in the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective implementation of this policy.
- Supporting other staff members and leaders to fulfil their roles and responsibilities effectively in line with this policy.

All staff working within the Early Years setting are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with, and following, this policy.
- Familiarising themselves with, and following, school specific guidance regarding the day-to-day running of the EYFS setting
- Remaining alert to any issues of concern in children.

Legal framework & statutory guidance

Linked national guidance: This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2024 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Linked policies and procedures:

- Admissions policy
- Attendance policy
- Behaviour policy
- Collective worship policy
- Complaints procedure
- Educational visits policy
- Fire safety policy and procedures
- First aid policy
- Health and safety policy



- Intimate care policy
- Missing child and late collection procedure
- Positive handling policy
- Reading policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy and procedures

Equalities & inclusion

The policy coordinators will apply this policy with due regard to the Equalities Act 2010. The school will ensure that all Early Years and Key Stage 1 pupils are offered an equal opportunity to access the provision outlined in this policy with particular regard to the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act 2010. The effectiveness of this policy in relation to the protected characteristics will be monitored by the Early Years/Key Stage 1 Leader through data analysis of key groups, including those which relate to the protected characteristics.

Every pupil at Ivel Valley has an EHCP; as a result, our setting is designed to support the needs of pupils with a wide range of different cognitive and physical disabilities. Pupils are taught in inclusive classes alongside peers of the same age. In addition, practitioners ensure pupils' individual needs are met, for example accessing individualised programmes in small groups or on a 1:1 basis.

Safeguarding implications

Good health and wellbeing are constantly promoted in Early Years. Some examples of how this is done:

- Constant promotion of positive behaviour and use of a Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) approach to support pupils and manage behaviour, with support available from the Ivel Valley PBS team
- It is a requirement to promote good oral health as part of the overall health promotion in early years settings. Healthy eating is encouraged through developing children's knowledge and understanding of different foods and many children brush their teeth in school as part of their regular routine.
- Children are supervised within sight and hearing of an adult during mealtimes to promote safety and adequate supervision.
- At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present and will accompany children on outings.
- Encouraging healthy lifestyles by regular opportunities for outdoor learning and physical play
- Risk assessments that are written by teachers and followed consistently by staff that protect children, but still encourage them to take age-appropriate and reasonable risks
- Working closely with Speech & Language Therapists to embed a total communication approach across the setting, enhanced by alternative and augmentative communication strategies specific to individual pupils
- The Key Worker system supporting children to build strong attachments with staff.
- Taking opportunities to support children to develop their emotional literacy.

The safeguarding and Family Support Teams at Ivel Valley work in partnership with relevant professionals



from Children’s Services, such as the Children with Disabilities social care team and the Early Help team. Our staff working in Early Years and Key Stage 1 follow our Ivel Valley Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, which sets out our whole-setting approach to safeguarding – including recognition of the additional barriers involved in safeguarding children with additional needs – and the training, systems and processes that Ivel Valley has in place for safeguarding children effectively; this includes the implementation of the Prevent duty.

Staff also follow the Ivel Valley procedures for managing concerns and allegations regarding staff and other adults working within Ivel Valley.

Sustainability implications

None