



Inspiring Learners, Growing Together

Castlethorpe First School • North Crawley CE School • Sherington CE School • Stoke Goldington CE School
St Andrews CE Infant School • Newton Blossomville CE School

The Village Schools Federation aspires to nurture and inspire every child to experience life in all its fullness. Our schools are rooted in inclusive Christian values to enable all to flourish by building knowledge, confidence and resilience for the future. We strive to be the best we can be.

“Whatever we do, we work at it with all our heart”

Colossians 3:23

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year. The Village Schools Federation Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5.

1. Aims

The Village Schools Federation (VSF) aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children therefore giving them the strong foundation for their future. We aim to ensure that all our children develop into independent and lifelong learners. As outlined in Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage; ‘Children develop quickly in the early years, and early years practitioners aim to do all they can to help children have the best possible start in life. Children have a right, spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender.’

Our high expectations will enable children to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. The schools ensure that all our children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need. All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this where children have been identified as having a specific need, an intervention programme will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed liaise with the Special Education Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo).

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them a secure foundation for learning, development and good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#), effective from 1 September 2025.

3. Structure of the EYFS

In the VSF Schools, EYFS is the reception year, children join in the September in the year in which they turn 5. Each school has an EYFS class base, sometimes EYFS are combined with Year 1 and Year 2 but have their own curriculum and access to enhanced provision.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

Intent: why do we teach what we teach?

Across the VSF, we place great value on the development of children as individuals, providing them with the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to prepare them for the next stage in their education. Our intent is to build strong foundations fostered in a curiosity and love of learning as well as moral and spiritual development, so that our pupils can go on to be active citizens of society and happy, curious life-long learners.

Our curriculum is therefore based on the cultural capital we know our pupils need so that they can gain the knowledge, skills and understanding they require for success. They can only achieve this if we embed the right habits for learning through the **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning – Play and Exploration, Active Learning and Creative and Critical Thinking**.

Our enabling environments and highly skilled early year's practitioners support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration, developing a love of reading, writing and number. This is

delivered through a holistic curriculum which maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained thinking following children's interests and ideas. We place great importance on imagination and creativity. We seek to create a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through a vibrant continuous indoor and outdoor provision. The curriculum is further enriched through trips, visits and regular forest school sessions.

Implementation: How do we teach what we teach?

4.1 Planning

Our staff are ambitious for all children, and plan activities and experiences for the children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and development of each child in their care, and consider whether the child needs any additional support. They use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability (SEND), staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding the children's activities, staff reflect on the different rates at which children are developing, and take these into account.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. Practitioners are trained and skilled in having quality interactions including questioning to extend learning

As children progress, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities and to help children to be year 1 ready.

Enhanced provision is planned for inside and out and there are multiple opportunities to write with writing resources readily available. High quality equipment and resources are available and clearly marked, no 'one use' are used for teaching, the emphasis is in children using resources in multiple use ways, i.e. a box can be a puppet theatre, a dinosaur, a car, a castle, a house, for storage, decorated, cut, joined.

There are 3 short discrete teaching sessions every day; phonics/reading, maths, writing – these teach skills the children need in order to use them in continuous enhanced provision throughout the day.

Reading is at the heart of our curriculum. Children follow the rigorous and highly successful Read, Write Inc program with fidelity so that they meet good outcomes for reading. We have chosen multiple high-quality texts to create an integrated approach to learning from which pupils can experience the full curriculum. Children take home a phonetically matched book and develop key word recognition to build fluency from the earliest opportunity. Our learning environments are book rich, and language rich, and children are read to throughout the day building a bank of favourite books which focus on 'old and gold' and 'new and bold.'

We follow the **Maths Mastery** approach using White Rose Maths with an emphasis on studying the key skills of number, calculation and shape so that pupils develop deep understanding and the acquisition of

mathematical language. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete resources which are then rehearsed and applied to their own learning during exploration. Pupils begin to develop these key skills during daily Maths sessions and they continue to explore sorting, quantities, shape, number, counting and measure skills throughout the day. These early mathematical experiences are carefully designed to help pupils remember the content they have been taught and to support them with integrating their new knowledge across the breadth of their experiences and into larger concepts. We follow the principal that Maths must be taught, not caught.

Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together. We have a range of additional intervention and support to enhance and scaffold children who require extra support. We offer challenge to all and identify pupils who need greater challenge using skilled questioning and offering open ended tasks that can be developed to the pupil's capabilities. Staff also use 'pinny time' which is a quick, on the spot intervention focused on sounds, sight words, blending and number retention with target individuals. The characteristics of effective learning are viewed as an integral part of all areas of learning and are reflected in our observations of children.

Impact: how do we know what pupils have learnt and how well they have learnt it?

Ultimately, we measure the impact of our teaching and learning by observing how engaged the children are, how immersed in their learning and if they learn something new. If children are highly engaged, leading their own learning, are inquisitive and solution focused, independent and resilient learners and are progressing in every lesson, using skills learnt and applying these to different situations, then the implementation of the EYFS teaching and the enabling environment has had the desired impact.

We use a variety of tools and techniques to measure the impact:

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership across the VSF schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Our curriculum needs to meet the needs of all our children, including our disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, so we spend time looking at and evaluating how children are learning. This is achieved through talking to children, looking at their work, observing their learning experiences and analysing formal data and progress. Every member of staff uses **ongoing observational assessment** to identify children's starting

points and plan experiences which ensure progress. We use Sonar Tracker as a recording tool at baseline and at 4 data points through the year. We use observation information on a weekly basis to plan learning experiences and next steps so that knowledge and skills are built cumulatively, the whole EYFS team meet to discuss pupil progress and plan for next steps.

6. Working with parents

The VSF recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

The key person for children is the class teacher and the teaching assistant. These adults ensure that parents are kept informed and develop the strong partnerships that are essential for the child's development.

7.1 Staff training

The schools will:

- Train all staff in safeguarding procedures in line with Annex C of the EYFS framework 2025 and the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance
- Support all staff to feel supported and confident in implementing our [VSF Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedures](#)
- Renew training every 2 years, or more often when it's needed to help maintain skills; keep up to date with any changes to our safeguarding procedures; or because of any safeguarding concerns
- Outline how training is delivered, and how staff are supported to put it in place, in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures
- Our designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy designated safeguarding leads (DDSL) will:
- Provide ongoing support, advice and guidance to all staff
- Attend a training course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex C of the most recent EYFS framework
- Liaise as needed with local statutory children's services agencies and our local safeguarding partners

7.2 Safer recruitment

When recruiting staff, The schools follow the procedures set out in the latest EYFS framework guidance on checking the suitability of new recruits, including:

- Obtaining a reference for any member of staff (including students and volunteers) before they are recruited
- Recording information about staff qualifications and identity checks, vetting processes and references

See our Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedures.

7.3 Whistleblowing

The VSF makes sure that all staff are aware of our whistleblowing procedures; feel able to raise concerns about any poor or unsafe practice; and know that such concerns will be taken seriously by the senior leadership team.

In the event that a member of staff feels that they need to blow the whistle on misconduct, they should report their concern to the **Executive Headteacher**. If the concern is about the Executive Headteacher or it is believed they may be involved in the wrongdoing in some way, the staff member should report their concern to the Chair of Governors, the Safeguarding Governor or refer to the LADO.

The VSF schools adopt the latest MKCC Whistleblowing Policy.

7.3.1 Malicious or vexatious allegations

If an allegation is made in good faith, but investigation finds no wrongdoing, there will be no disciplinary action against the member of staff who raised the concern.

If, however, an allegation is shown to be deliberately invented or malicious, the schools will consider whether any disciplinary action is appropriate against the person making the allegation.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

The VSF recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure; when their individual needs are met; and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

All practitioners are alert to any issues of concern in children's lives at home or elsewhere.

See the VSF Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedures for more information.

8.1 Paediatric first aid (PFA)

Each school has at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

8.2 The designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

The VSF DSL is the Executive Headteacher and has lead responsibility for safeguarding children. They are also responsible for:

- Liaising with local statutory children's services agencies
- Providing support, advice and guidance to all other staff on an ongoing basis, and on any specific safeguarding issue as required
- Attending a safeguarding training course that complies with the criteria set out in annex C of the latest EYFS framework

The DSL works with a team of Deputy DSL's who work in and across the VSF schools [VSF Safeguarding Team](#)

8.3 Absence

The VSF promotes excellent school attendance from the beginning of EYFS to the end of Year 2. Please refer to the [VSF Attendance Policy](#)

8.4 Oral health and tooth brushing

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in EYFS children are taught about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth
- The role of the dentist and looking after our teeth

8.7 Safer eating

While children are eating, there will always be at least 1 member of staff in the room with a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate (from a course consistent with the criteria set out in Annex A of the latest EYFS framework). All children will be within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating, and seated safely in an appropriate chair and, where possible, in a designated eating space.

Before a child joins our setting, The schools will get information on their:

- Dietary requirements and preferences
- Food allergies and intolerances
- Health requirements

The schools will share this information with all staff involved in food preparation and handling. At each mealtime and snack time it will be clear which staff member is responsible for checking that the food meets all the requirements for each child.

The schools will make sure that all staff are aware of the symptoms and treatments for allergies and anaphylaxis; the differences between allergies and intolerances; and that children can develop allergies at any time.

The schools will consult with parents/carers to:

- Create allergy action plans for their child – with the help of health professionals, where appropriate
The schools will also keep this information up to date and share it with all staff
- Discuss their child's progress with foods

The schools will prepare food in a way that:

- Prevents choking
- Meets each child's individual developmental needs
- Is in line with the DfE's [Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

In the event of a choking incident that requires intervention, The schools will record details of the incident and make the child's parents/carers aware. The schools will periodically review the records to identify whether we can change anything in our practice to make eating safer, and then take action as appropriate.

8.8 Accident or injury

The schools will keep a first aid box (which contains appropriate items for children) always accessible.

The schools will keep a written record of accident or injuries and any first aid treatment.

The schools will inform parents or carers the same day as, or as soon as reasonably practicable after, of any:

- Accident or injury sustained by the child
- First aid treatment given

The schools will notify the relevant authority of any serious accident, illness, or injury to, or death of any child while in our care and inform them of the action taken, as soon as reasonably practicable. The schools follow the [VSF First Aid Policy](#)

8.9 Safety of premises

The schools will make sure that our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor space, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children we care for and the activities provided on the premises.

The schools will comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including fire safety and hygiene requirements.

8.10 Toileting and privacy

The schools will make sure that there are:

- Enough toilets and hand basins available for the children
- Suitable and hygienic nappy changing facilities
- Separate toilet facilities for adults

During nappy changes and toileting. The schools will balance children's privacy with their safeguarding and support needs. For further information please refer to the [VSF Intimate Care Policy](#)

Reviewed: October 2025

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Next review: October 2026

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	<i>VSF Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Procedures</i>
Procedure for responding to illness	<i>VSF Children's Sickness and Medicines Policy</i>
Administering medicines policy	
Emergency evacuation procedure	<i>School Office</i>
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	<i>School Office</i>
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	<i>VSF Attendance Policy</i>
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	<i>VSF Complaints Policy</i>