



Villa Real School
together we achieve

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2024

Responsibility: N.Fitzpatrick

Date: May 2024

Date to be reviewed: May 2027

AIMS

The aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum at Villa Real School are as follows:

- to provide a safe and secure environment in which children can enjoy learning, learn through play, have fun, explore and develop
- to provide a broad, balanced and rich curriculum that focusses on preparing children for future learning and developing skills for life
- to ensure that every child is included and has their specific, individual needs met
- to ensure the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better so that every child achieves the outcomes specified within their Education, Health and Care Plan
- to work closely with parents/carers to achieve the best possible outcomes for their child, both at school and at home

VISION

Our vision is to develop well rounded, confident and responsible individuals who aspire to achieve their full potential. We will do this by providing a welcoming, happy, safe, and supportive learning environment in which everyone is equal and all achievements are celebrated.

The EYFS vision is reflective of the whole school values of child centred, aspirational, innovation, togetherness and communication and used to support the overarching principles set out in the EYFS statutory framework the unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, and the importance of learning and development.

Villa Real School EYFS are **child centred** to provide the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential, from whatever their unique starting points may be. We offer bespoke, personalised, inclusive, enabling environments within which the children can learn, develop and take risks to further enhance their independence. Staff promote a love of learning through our engaging topic-based curriculum. We create both indoor and outdoor environments that foster personal, social and emotional development appropriate for all.

Villa Real School EYFS is both **aspirational** and realistic, fostering a '**can do**' approach to all areas of development, with open expectations – there is no limit to what the children and staff can achieve. We foster good self-esteem through focusing on what the children **can do** with some support today, allowing the staff to withdraw gradually, to allow them to achieve more with greater independence over time. The children make excellent progress, taking into account their different developmental starting points and learn at different rates due to the responsive and aspirational nature of the teaching delivered.

Villa Real School EYFS are **innovative** and champion new initiatives that will positively impact the learning of our children, the knowledge and ability of our staff and support for the parents and wider community. EYFS staff push

boundaries in order to develop dynamic and creative solutions, sharing knowledge, research and resources to best meet the needs of the children.

Villa Real School EYFS staff model and promote the learning of '**togetherness**'. The staff within the key stages are flexible and share their own areas of expertise with one another to the benefit of all. We pride ourselves on our equality and diversity practices, where all are valued, welcomed and supported.

Villa Real School EYFS pride itself on effective **communication**, in all its facets. The school was awarded Communication Friendly Status, for its commitment and practice in supporting a total communication approach. We develop a range of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) strategies to support both receptive and expressive communication, taking into account the additional sensory needs of our children. As best practice suggests, we use aided language stimulation – where the adults model the use of AAC, whether that be gesture, signing or symbol based, to teach the children the language and understanding of the system before we expect them to use it expressively.

Communication is the foundation of all that we do – from the children, staff, parents and stakeholders. We have an open-door policy and actively promote good communication with parents through home-school diaries, daily recording of attainment on internet accessible programs for families to see and comment upon, to stay and play / coffee mornings and virtual meetings. We work closely with stakeholders to support the children and families through TAFs, EHCP meetings, therapy meetings, behaviour teams, orthotics, school nursing team meetings and more.

LEGISLATION

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the January 2024 'Statutory framework for the Early Years' foundation stage.

STRUCTURE OF THE EYFS at VILLA REAL SCHOOL

Villa Real School has the capacity of three specialist environments for children within our Early Years Foundation Stage:

- A provision for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- A provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- A provision for pupils with Profound & Multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) within the Conductive Education provision

We cater for pupils from the age of two years who have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP). Depending on intake and cohorts each year EYFS children may be in discreet EYFS / specialist provisions or mixed age and stage of development classes following the EYFS curriculum.

CURRICULUM

Villa Real School follows the EYFS areas of learning and development as outlined in the 2024 EYFS Framework. There are 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 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 strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas.

Each Prime and Specific learning area has Early Learning Goals set within each, see the dot points below for the headings of each of the 17 ELGs.

Areas of Learning and Development			
Prime Areas			
Communication & Language	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Physical Development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening, Attention & Understanding Speaking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-regulation Managing self Building relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross Motor Skills Fine Motor Skills 	
Specific Areas			
Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Arts and Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehension Word reading Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number Numerical patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past and Present People, Culture and Communities The Natural World 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creating with materials Being Imaginative and Expressive

All classes with children of EYFS age, deliver the curriculum through a themed/topic approach so that learning is cross-curricular and covers all 7 areas of the EYFS to ensure the full coverage of the educational programmes set out in the guidance, using indoor and outdoor learning environments. See appendix 2 for the 3-year rolling curriculum overview.

PLANNING

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, they focus on the 3 prime areas of learning and consider what the child can do as a starting point. Staff take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan appropriate and enjoyable experiences. All of the children at Villa Real School have special educational needs and/or disabilities, so staff plan with careful consideration for the provision that each child needs in order to achieve the outcomes specified within their EHC plan. They incorporate advice from other professionals that support the child, e.g. speech therapy, physiotherapy, sensory support service etc.

A Long-Term Planning Overview (available on the school website / appendix 2) provides a four year rolling programme of themes for learning. These themes are designed to be flexible according to the needs and interests of the children and enable staff to respond to and use seasonal changes to support learning as and when they occur in the local environment.

Individual medium-term plans are developed each half term to summarise the objectives linked to the school adapted version of the 2020 DfES Development Matters (updated September 2023) document, set in each of the seven areas of learning and development. Whole class / EYFS cohort, overview plans then document the activities that will enable the objectives to be learned and practiced, including the opportunity to follow interests and observations that inform immediate provision.

Each class uses a short term recording format that enables specific observations of each individual child to be recorded and used to plan next steps for learning on a weekly basis, and half termly basis.

The observation records are collected in the learning journal and are available for parents / carers to read during parent's evenings and stay / play opportunities.

In addition, staff record daily observations through images and videos on Earwig that families can access in real time.

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 needs and interests, guiding their development through positive interactions, encouragement and modelling.

Staff recognise the importance of, and actively promote, child-led play in our classes. Children are given regular opportunities to choose what they want to play with, choose which areas of the indoor and outdoor classroom they want to play in and are given the space and time to explore as independently as they can.

Due to the special educational needs of our pupils, there is a need for increased structure, adult support, modelling and adult-led teaching compared to that which exists in a mainstream early years setting. Many of our pupils need support to demonstrate how to play with toys in different ways and explore different areas and visual supports are necessary to regulate their behaviour and reduce anxiety.

All pupils at Villa Real are given the opportunity to engage in child-initiated play using different strategies according to the specialist class they are in. Within each class, the proportion of adult-led and child-initiated activities is different based on the needs of the children. In the SLD provision for

example, a continuous provision approach is used and may be timetabled for children to explore and make choices. However, in the ASC provision, pupils may require significantly more structure and support to play, so child-initiated play involves pupils accessing 'choice' boxes and resources set out in a particular indoor or outdoor area. In the CE provision, children will be offered a choice of play options for them to indicate what they want, or encouraged to use an Aided Language Display to choose the play activity.

Staff use their observations and interactions to review the types of play schemas the children are displaying and from this, are able to ensure they are expanded and developed further.

'A schema is a pattern of repeated actions. Clusters of schemas develop onto later concepts.' (Athey, 2007)

By repeatedly acting in a certain way, using the same action on a variety of objects to investigate further, children adapt new information to add to their understandings of how things work and construct meaning about what they are doing. Schemas help young children to form connections in their brain, to build on previous learning to form new ideas and understandings, and to develop skills that they can use in their world.

There are on average, eight play schemas, which are described by the way in which children show their repetitive actions or behaviours;

1. Trajectory – making lines in space with things or with own body (throwing, dropping, rolling)
2. Rotation – turning or spinning objects or themselves
3. Transporting – carrying objects in hands, pockets, bags, wheeled transporters
4. Enclosing – creating borders around things or themselves
5. Connecting – building and joining things together
6. Positioning – lining items up, stacking or balancing items
7. Enveloping – covering up or 'wrapping' items, others or themselves
8. Orientation – investigating different viewpoints (hanging upside down, bending down, looking through their legs)

Outdoor learning is an essential part of every child's experience at Villa Real School. Each class has access to outdoor areas, as well as larger, communal play areas, gardens and Forest School spaces.

MARKING AND FEEDBACK / MARKING PRINCIPLES

Nursery aged pupils

- Verbal feedback and observations should be recorded on individual recording sheets, covering all E.L.G. areas and CoEL and hard copies are added to their Learning Journal file.
- Any paper-based work can either be sent home if artwork/craft and a photo on Earwig to evidence, or added to their Learning Journal file as appropriate.
- Photographs of learning, both formal, directed and informal, will be

recorded as appropriate on Earwig with E.L.G. tags added.

Reception aged pupils

- Pupils will have observations of learning recorded on individual recording sheets, covering all E.L.G. areas and CoEL and added to their Learning Journal

Pupils will have exercise books for Literacy, Read Write Inc. (where appropriate) and Numeracy. It is expected that 3 pieces of work in each of these learning areas are completed per week, as a minimum and recorded in either books, hard copy or on Earwig.

- Pieces of work from other learning areas will be marked. The amount of work completed should be appropriate to the individual, and added to their journal file
- All work is marked in green pen
- 2 stars and a wish should be used for every 3-4 lessons of work.
- For a practical activity, if the pupil/student is unable to complete any written work, Engagement Model observation forms may be used to record progress. Alternatively, this activity can be recorded on Earwig, annotated with a clear Learning Objective
- The level of help given should be annotated on every piece of work
- All children will be given success criteria/learning objective for their guided activities
- Date, title must be underlined. A full date should be written in all books (e.g. Tuesday 1st July 2023) except for numeracy/mathematics, where a numeric date can be used (e.g. 01.07.2023)
- Thumbs are used as AFL at end of sessions for the children to self-assess their learning, where able, or use of symbols for those with fine motor difficulties.

ASSESSMENT

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the Early Years approach at Villa Real. Staff observe children formally and informally throughout the day to identify what they can do, what they are interested in and how they learn best. These observations are used to inform future planning and make judgements of pupil progress. Staff also take into account information that is shared by parents/carers and use this to inform assessment and next steps for learning.

Staff use a range of observation tools to capture the learning and progress that children are making. This includes observations of planned or unplanned activities, 'wow' moments to celebrate specific successes and short (anecdotal) observations that are collated on the recording sheets.

Children are formally assessed using the electronic BSquared Assessment Tool, using the Early Learning Goals broken down into small developmental steps. This is an assessment tool used throughout the school and the EYFS

program feeds into the Engagements Steps or Progression Steps as the child moves into Year 1 and onwards.

A baseline assessment is completed within the first half term of entry into school and then twice per year thereafter. All pupils at Villa Real also have REAL targets that link directly to their EHCP objectives, that are set and reviewed termly.

Staff use the Development Matters, non-statutory curriculum guidance to support the tracking of progress, set targets and inform planning for the next half term.

Assessments against each area of learning and development are made using information within the child's observation sheets, lesson observations or records electronically on Earwig and parental comments.

At the end of the EYFS teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child which is submitted to the local authority. Children are assessed against the 17 early learning goals (detailed in the EYFS Statutory Framework), indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels

The profile reflects ongoing observations, assessment and discussions with parents/carers. Information from the profile is shared with parents via the end of year school report.

WORKING WITH PARENTS/ CARERS

At Villa Real, we recognise that children learn and develop best when there is a strong partnership between home, school and the wider multi-disciplinary team. Advice from parents and professionals is incorporated into the child's EHC plan and individualised programmes developed according to the child's specific needs.

The induction process for new pupils is tailored to the needs of individual children and the wishes of their parents/carers. Initial visits to existing nurseries / child care or visits to school are carried out to enable staff to meet the family and observe the child in their own environment if at all possible. Close liaison with local nurseries and early years' settings support the transition process. Observations of children in their nursery setting are carried out, along with meetings between key staff and a personalised transition plan for visit to Villa Real. Records, reports and information from previous placements are used to inform baseline assessment of children during their first half term at Villa Real.

When a child starts in EYFS at Villa Real they are assigned a key person who:

- Helps to ensure that their child's learning and care is tailored to their individual needs

- Helps the child become familiar with the setting when they first start
- Offers a secure relationship for the child within school
- Seeks to engage and support parents in guiding their child's development at home
- Maintains and updates the child's Learning Journey during their time in EYFS at Villa Real (from the child's start date until the end of Reception Year)

Parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development via:

- Daily Home-School diaries and Class Dojo
- Half termly planning overviews sent home
- Termly REAL targets sent home on a termly basis
- Parents evenings & Annual Review Meetings
- 'Stay and Play' sessions during the school day – when able to do so in a COVID safe way
- Opportunities to view and comment on Learning Journey observations
- Asking for 'Special Moments' from home
- Family Coffee Mornings & Information events (in person / virtual as required)
- Annual (end of year) reports

SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE PROCEDURES

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school Child Protection Policy.

At Early Years Foundation Stage pupils' access to the Internet will be by adult demonstration with occasional directly-supervised access to specific and approved online materials which supports the learning outcomes planned for the pupils' age and ability.

Members of staff are not permitted to use their own personal phones or devices for contacting children, young people and their families within or outside of the setting in a professional capacity. Any pre-existing relationships which could compromise this will be discussed with leaders/managers. Staff do not use personal devices such as mobile phones, tablets or cameras to take photos or videos of children and will only use work-provided equipment for this purpose. Staff do not use any personal devices directly with children and only use work-provided equipment during lessons/educational activities.

MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be updated subject to any legislative changes and the Local Authority (LA) will monitor as part of their statutory responsibilities.

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

This checklist summarises the policies and procedures that we must have according to the EYFS statutory framework.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Keeping Children Safe in Education Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and Safety policy and Medical Conditions Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions policy and Administration of Medicines Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	Individual Pupils Emergency Evacuation Procedure documents (PEEPS)
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Keeping Children Safe in Education Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	DCC Missing from Education and Missing Children Protocols
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints policy

Appendix 2: EYFS Long Term Curriculum Overview

In our Early Years classes at Villa Real School we deliver the curriculum through a themed /topic approach so that learning is cross curricular and covers all areas of the EYFS Curriculum, using indoor and outdoor learning environments.

Villa Real School has highlighted the following elements from the EYFS Framework (Jan 2024) Educational Programmes, as non-negotiable content and provision for each individual's bespoke curriculum plan, within each topic covered, as set out below;

Communication and Language

- Daily reading
- Opportunities to talk / interact with and without adults
- Develop vocabulary – adult must plan what vocabulary will be supported and planned for
- Access to communication and language in Continuous Provision with and without adults.

PSED

- Focus on developing attachments to key adults
- Focus on developing supportive relationships
- Focus on understanding of feelings and emotions
- Develop an increased sense of self (including looking after their body, developing independence, develop friendships, develop confidence, healthy eating, understand and express dis/likes)

Physical Development

- Daily physical activity
- Daily gross motor opportunities
- Daily fine motor opportunities
- Opportunities to develop physical skills through play and to create their own play
- Repeated and varied physical play rather than discreet sessions only

Literacy

- Develop a love for reading and being read to, both fiction and non-fiction
- Provide explicit opportunities for language comprehension prior to reading and writing skill development
- Progression of reading to move through shared reading, to skilled word reading, speedy working out and familiar words
- For most able, the development writing composition (spelling and handwriting) and composition (discussing / articulating ideas and structuring in speech before writing)

Mathematics

- Basic skills in number to ensure a strong grounding
- Deep practical application and use of number to 10
- Develop mathematical vocabulary
- Develop awareness and understanding of patterns and relationships / connections to create 'number sense'
- Develop spatial awareness and reasoning skills for a grounding in shape, space and measures
- Cultivate a 'have a go' attitude to mathematics and talk through the choices and ideas

Understanding the World

- Experiences to reflect their community
- Ensure we widen their experiences from their home life – this requires good relationship / sharing with families and carers
- Ensure we provide real life opportunities
- Provide broad experiences through stories, videos and visits including non-fiction
- Develop basic vocabulary to support later learning in Science, Geography, History and R.E.

Expressive Art and Design

- Develop artistic and cultural awareness
- Provide broad experiences of tools and materials
- Ensure development and place importance on play and imagination, e.g. medium used for a purpose such as a stick for an arm
- Ensure awareness of what they have and can access at home to allow school to move on from this starting point
- Model communication that is important for imaginative play to build vocabulary

The themes for learning are designed to be flexible according to the needs and interests of the children, as well as making the most of seasonal changes as and when they occur in the local environment. Observations and evaluations of children's learning are used to inform medium and planning in each Early Years class.

Themes for Learning (3 year rolling programme):

	AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER
Festivals & Celebrations	Halloween, Bonfire Night, Harvest, Diwali (Hinduism), Hannukah festival of light (Judaism), Christmas	Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, Holi festival of colours (Hinduism), Mother's Day, Easter	Father's Day, Wesak (Buddhism), Eid (Islam)
2023-24	<i>Me, my family & home</i>	<i>North Pole / Polar animals & water</i>	Holidays & Travel
	PSED / Careers: Health visitors, refuse worker, postal worker, window cleaner, delivery person	PSED / Careers: Fisheries, fish shop, cameraman, weather person,	PSED / Careers: pilot, skipper, train driver, Airport staff, travel agent, shopkeeper (clothing etc.)
2024 - 25	<i>My body & food</i>	Farms and Growing	Buildings and Construction & Castles
	PSED / Careers: Dentist, Dr, Nurse, chef, greengrocer, bakers	PSED / Careers: Greengrocer, farmers, garden centre, dairy, vets, bakers	PSED / Careers: Builders, Firefighters, grounds worker
2025 - 26	<i>Me, my toys including vehicles</i>	Traditional Tales and The Woods	<i>Amazing adventures (Jungles/ Space / Pirates)</i>
	PSED / Careers: Mechanic, toy maker, shop keeper, train driver / conductor,	PSED / Careers: Forestry workers, baker, farmer, gardener	PSED / Careers: Astronaut, explorers, shipyards, dock workers, fisheries