

Federation of All Saints & St Margaret's

EARLY YEARS AND FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Mission Statement

We will provide a happy, caring and stimulating environment, in which every child may achieve their full potential, valuing the variety of faith and cultural experiences in our children.

We will help children develop their relationship with God through prayer, worship and liturgy, helping them to live as good Christians.

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1. Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at St Margaret's Primary School.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at St Margaret's Primary School. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old and to Nursery children from the term after their third birthday. These children are in Foundation One and Two.

In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS setting at St Margaret's Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and created by God.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community and church community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.

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- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions different to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and



development.

- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting at St Margaret's Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and 'Children Learn in Different Ways and at Different Rates.'

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning:

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers must also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

Educational programmes which practitioners deliver in the setting must involve activities and experiences from one of the following seven areas. These are:

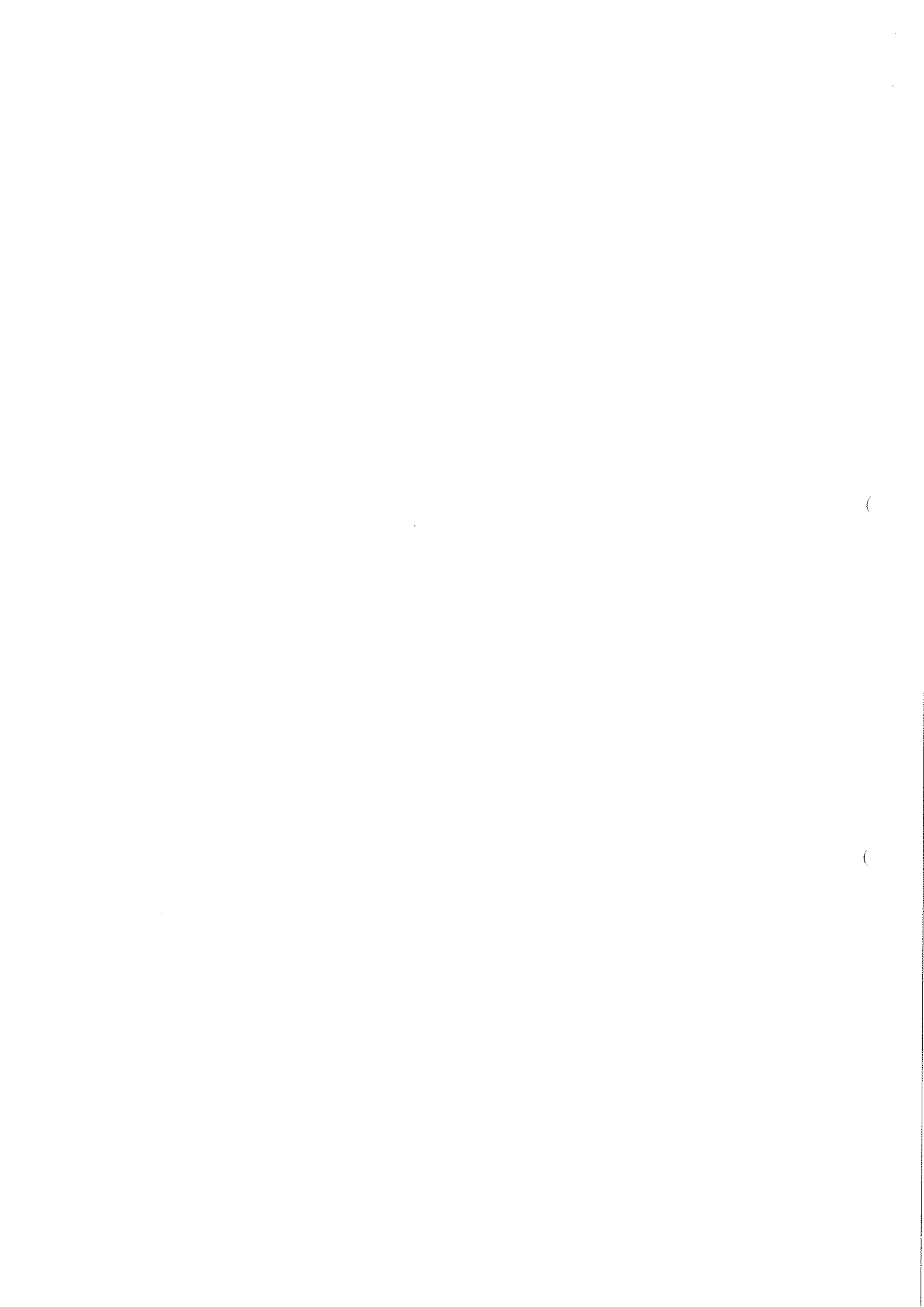
1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding of the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

At St Margaret's Primary School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1. Children start the 'Come and See' scheme of work for religious education when they enter Nursery. This scheme works in harmony with the EYFS curriculum.

4. Active Learning through Play

At St Margaret's Primary School we recognise that young children learn best when they



are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. In the EYFS setting at St Margaret's School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding. In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

5. Assessment and Record Keeping

As each child enters the Foundation Stage we use our professional judgement to assess the age band children are working 'within' across the EYFS 17 areas of learning.

Within 6 weeks of the child starting they will be given a 'baseline' assessment.

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at St Margaret's Primary School. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data.

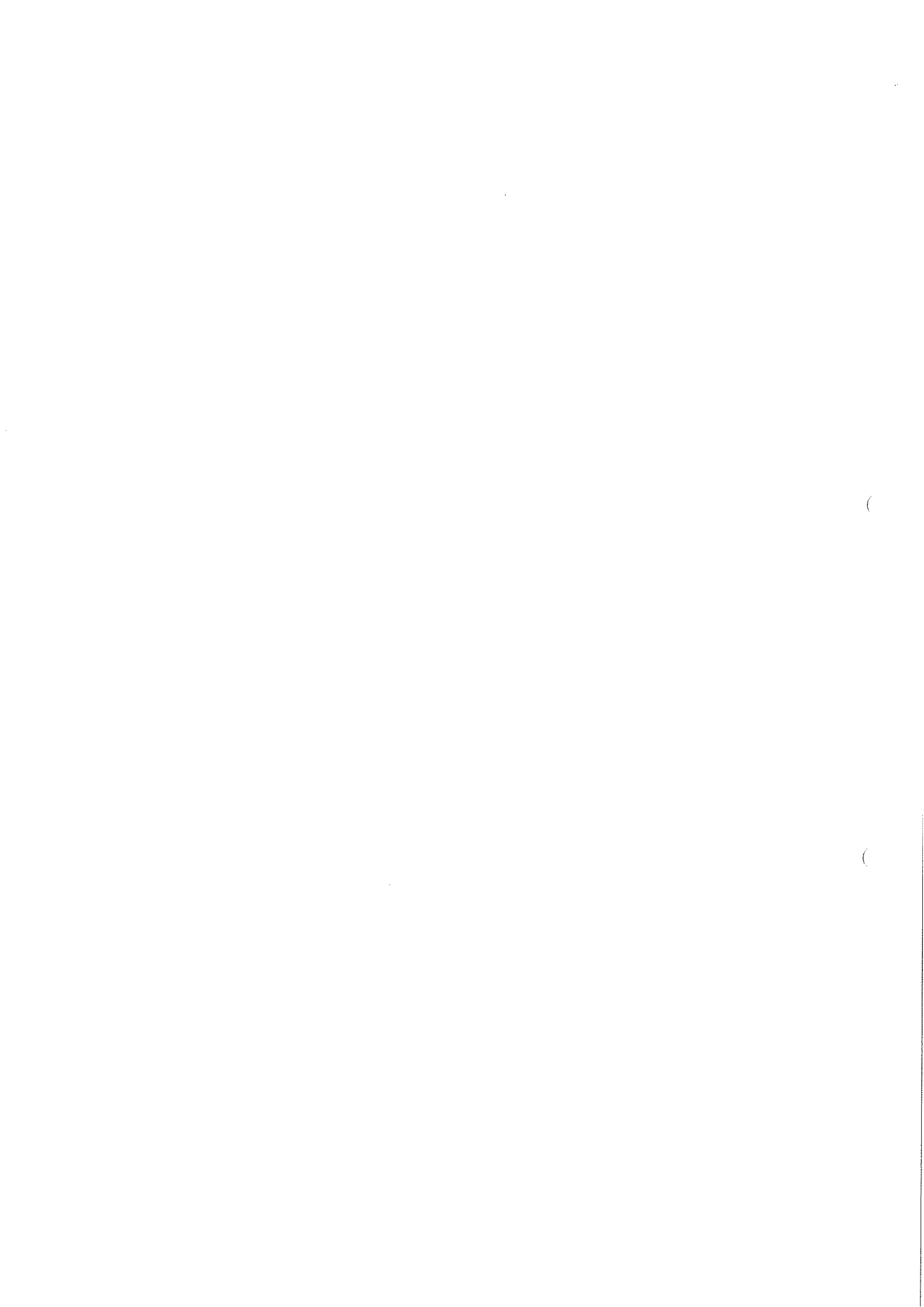
The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally).

Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs). All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journeys.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the



new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012). This is updated at least once each term to track individual progress. At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Baseline assessment is carried out using the EYFS Profile during the children's first six weeks upon entering the setting. Judgments made on children's development in the Profile are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

Expected Standards for Foundation Stage 1 are based on each child's individual age :

30-50 months= Inline with ARE(Age Related Expectations)

22-36 months= Below ARE

Expected Standards for Foundation 2 Stage are:

40-60 months = Inline with ARE (Age Related Expectations)

30-50 months = Below ARE

Any other lower age band below = Significantly below ARE

At the end of the year we will assess the Reception children against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are EMERGING, EXPECTING or EXCEEDING.

6. Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. The whole school was involved in deciding the ½ termly topics, loosely based on the school's two year topic plan.

Medium term planning is created with all early years practitioners involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors. The setting also makes use of the outdoor environment whenever possible.

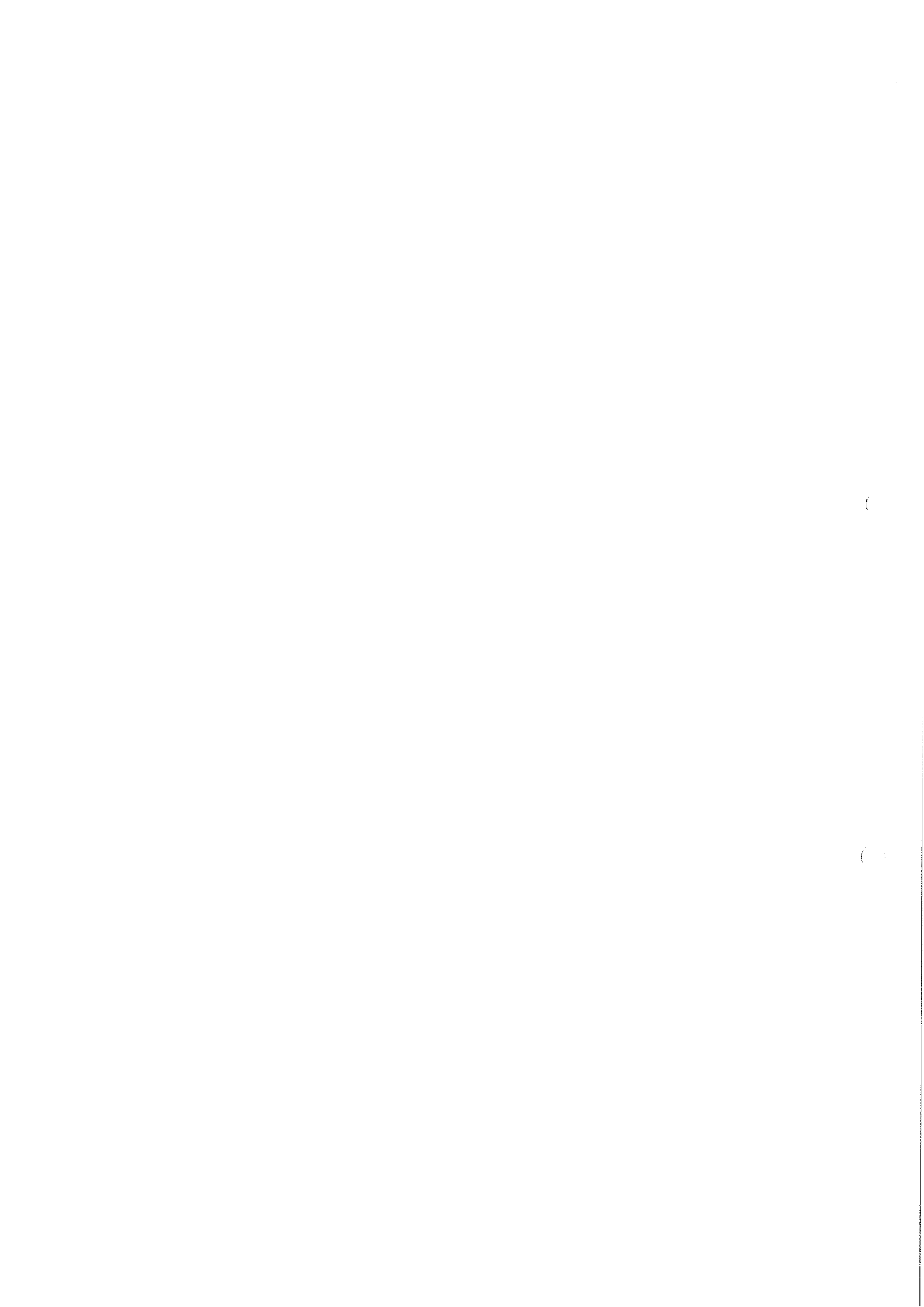
Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

7. Parents as Partners

At St Margaret's Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through questionnaires and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Whole school newsletters are also sent home on a weekly basis.



Parents are invited to attend parent consultations during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent consultation takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and wellbeing with parents include Learning Journeys, end of year reports and Celebration assemblies where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work and special events for Father's Days.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

8. Admissions and Induction

St Margaret's Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year and 15 hours a week for Nursery aged children.

Before they start in the setting, all children are offered a series of visits during the Term before they are due to start. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the setting environment. In the Summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations.

In September staff from the setting carry out home visits for all children joining the school.

Following the home visits children attend the setting. We have a staggered start, with groups of the children joining part-time. Once all children have been inducted into the school the children begin attending full-time. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting.

Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

See Admissions Policy for more information.

9. Equal Opportunities

All practitioners at St Margaret's Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at St Margaret's Primary School.

See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.



10. Special Educational Needs

See Inclusion Policy for more information.

