

Meppershall Church of England Academy

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Date adopted by Governors/ Academy	October 2026
Date to be reviewed	September 2027
Policy Status	
Responsible member	Mrs Louise Wisson

Contents

Section	Page Number
Rationale	Page2
Unique child	Page 2
Starting at our setting	Page 3
Learning & Development	Page 4
Observing & Assessing	Page 5
Transitions	Page 6
Equal Opportunities	Page 6
Opportunities for All	Page 7

At Meppershall Church of England Academy, our vision is for every child to thrive in our environments of faith, aspiration, creativity, challenge and celebration; to make

their own unique contribution to our settings, the community and the wider world.
This is based on two texts from the Bible:

‘God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God lives in them.’
(1 John 4:16)

‘Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it’
(Proverbs 22.6)

1.Rationale

1.1 At Meppershall CE Academy we believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. Our aim is to provide caring and stimulating environments where every child develops individually with a love of discovery and learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) staff in both settings provide children with opportunities that build upon their experiences and interests to enable all children to reach their potential in every aspect of their development.

1.2 At Meppershall CE Academy and Meppershall Preschool we embrace the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and the principles and commitments which it requires. The EYFS is a statutory document which details the standards for learning, development and care for all children within our 2 Early Years settings. At the beginning of the Reception year children will complete the Governments Reception Baseline Assessment. It is not a test that a child can pass or fail, but rather a snapshot of their abilities in early language, communication, literacy, and maths to establish a starting point for the whole-school progress measure. At the end of the EYFS the children’s learning and achievements are recorded by the completion of the Early Years Profile at the end of their Reception year.

2. A Unique Child

2.1 Meppershall CE Academy recognises that children arrive in the EYFS with a wide range of skills, abilities and particular interests. Reception teachers have the opportunity to build relationships with the children through regular visits to Meppershall Pre-School. There are opportunities for the children to come to the school in the summer term to visit the site and continue building on their skills and confidence in the school setting. Extra visits can be arranged if needed as we aim to ensure all parents and children feel positive about starting school in September.

2.2 Our Early Years Lead at school, Preschool SENDCo Ms Louise Woodcock and our Trust SENDCo, Mrs Sue Jones, work with Early Years staff, families and children, offering appropriate support with any additional educational needs in order to ensure that every child's needs can be met.

2.3 We recognise that children's individuality means that they will cope with starting at our settings in different ways. We invite all new starters into school for 'stay and play' sessions in the summer term before they start school in order to familiarise them with the classroom and outdoor areas. Children who do not attend Meppershall Pre School are also invited to these sessions. New entrants are also invited to attend our Sports Day at the end of the summer term and can join in the pre-school race. On 'Step Up' (transition) day the children will come to spend another session in their new class. Our transition sessions are continuing to evolve so please look out for future information if your child receives a place at school.

Foundation Stage children will start school on a full-time basis at the start of the year. If for any reason the class teacher and parents feel that a child is not yet ready to start full time this can be discussed with the Head of School and a flexible, phased starting pattern can be agreed.

3. Starting at our Settings

3.1 In both of our Early Years settings we recognise the huge contribution that parents and carers make to their children's learning and we work hard to develop and sustain positive links with parents. We actively encourage parents to become involved in the life of the school, and operate an open door policy in which we encourage parents to speak to their child's teacher to share any celebrations, concerns or worries. We actively encourage parents to become involved with their child's Early Years Profile, by sharing observations through the use of ClassDojo. We offer regular updates through photographs and information to update you on our learning themes and to celebrate every child's success.

3.2 Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers both before their children start school and during the academic year. Foundation Staff are easily accessible to parents every day after school.

4. Learning and Development

4.1 At Meppershall Preschool and Meppershall CE Academy we believe children learn best through real experiences and active learning. We know children learn at their highest level when at play; therefore, we do not make a distinction between play and work. We provide a daily routine for the children, which includes 'adult led', 'adult initiated' and 'child initiated', which is referred to as 'Discovery Time', learning opportunities. We facilitate children's learning throughout Discovery Time and planned play activities. In doing so, we ensure that children have opportunities to engage and thrive in all aspects and areas of learning.

4.2 The statutory identified seven areas of learning comprise:

Three Prime Areas:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Four Specific areas:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding the World,

Expressive Arts & Design

4.3 We believe that it is vitally important for adults to support children's learning through play. Learning should be personalised by building on the child's interests and involving them fully in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build on their skills. Children are intrinsically motivated to be lifelong learners through our adopted approach using Development Matters and, basing our activities and experiences around our main themes of learning.

4.4 At appropriate opportunities the adults will:

Question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking

- Extend vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- Encourage independence
- Add resources that stimulate motivate and engage the learner · Demonstrate / model and work alongside

- Help children to see links in their learning
- Support and encourage
- Encourage children to be problem solvers and investigators
- Re-direct the play if necessary
- Help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- Promote children's well-being
- Observe and assess learning
- Identify next steps in every pupils learning
- Provide feedback to child/other adults/parents
- Ensure the environment is safe and secure

4.5 At Meppershall CE Academy we model and foster respect, empathy and caring relationships. We encourage understanding of self and a responsibility to others. So that we can play and learn safely and happily at Meppershall we encourage the children to:

- Be kind to each other
- Look after each other
- Listen to one another of an inside and outside area. Both, which are of equal importance.

5.Observing and Assessing

5.1 We use information from parents and other pre-school settings to inform our knowledge and understanding of every child. In school and preschool all Foundation Stage staff are involved in observing the children, and identifying the next steps for their progress and achievement.

5.2 In both settings maintain online profiles via an app for parents called Class Dojo, which documents the child's learning journey. We encourage children and parents to make contributions to their child's profile and to access them. In our Reception Class we use our knowledge of the children and evidence collected in the children's profile, to inform our judgements and to support completion of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

5.3 We analyse and review what we see or know about each child's development and learning, and then we will make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan appropriate next steps and is an ongoing process throughout the school year.

6. Transitions

6.1 When children join our Preschool we offer a visit for all enquiring parents. Once families are registered and booked in we meet with the parents to go through induction paperwork. Children are offered a staggered start if needed. During the first few sessions we are in regular communication with parents, updating them with how their child is settling and offer early collection should they need it.

6.2 We really understand that transition to the main school can be a big change for some children. We are continuing to develop our transition process with the merger of our settings to ensure we support every child in making the best start to their Reception year. Children will be familiar with the school setting and the Reception (Acorns) staff. We will continue to share with you the transition process throughout the year, including pupils who join our school from other settings.

6.3 In the summer term the Acorns children experience transition sessions in the Year 1 class. Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together to ensure a smooth transition from Acorns to Year 1, ensuring that the principles of the Foundation Stage are built upon. Some of the transition events include Visits from Year 1 teacher into Acorn class; Acorns teacher takes children to the Year 1 class for sessions; Reception children visit year 1 classroom in the second half of the summer term. We also include a more structured teaching approach to learning in summer term to further support children with the changes as they enter into the National Curriculum expectations.

7. Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality (Refer also to these specific policies)

All school policies have an explicit aim of promoting race equality and will be reviewed in terms of their contribution and effectiveness in achieving this aim. Our Preschool and School provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils including those in the Foundation Stage. We recognise that citizenship presents opportunities for encouraging respect for diversity. Our subject leaders are responsible for ensuring their subjects raise awareness of multi-cultural issues and challenge stereotypical views of different racial and cultural groups and nomadic communities. In the purchase of resources, our subject leaders ensure that materials reflect and celebrate ethnic and cultural diversity.

8. Opportunities for All

8.1 As for all our pupils, Meppershall Preschool and Meppershall CE Academy is committed to helping every Looked After Child (LAC) to achieve the highest standards they can. Staff ensure that in delivering the curriculum they set suitable learning challenges for LAC, respond to the diverse learning needs of LAC, and help to overcome the potential barriers to learning and assessment for LAC.

8.2 Intimate care is given to children who need it in line with our settings policies. This is any care that involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on the age and stage of a child's development, they may need some support, for example, dressing, nappy changing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear and clothes following an accident.

8.3 A parent will inform staff if their child is likely to require such care and a discussion will take place to agree how their needs can be met as closely in school as they would be met at home. Parents provide clean clothing and wipes if needed. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. Privacy is maintained as far as possible and members of staff are always expected to change a child within sight of another member of staff. Parents are informed when this care is given.

9. Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of the achievement and of the quality of teaching in our Early Years settings is the responsibility of the Head of School and SLT.