

Slaithwaite CE J & I School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Children join our Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

High quality early learning, together with good parenting provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents, enabling each individual to fulfil their potential through their learning and development, as they grow up.

At our school, we endeavour to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's 'readiness for transition to the Year 1 curriculum' and give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for excellent individual future progress through school and life.

The four guiding principles of the EYFS, through the *Development Matters Document*, work together for children and shape the practice in our setting. These are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

This Policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

A Unique Child

We value each Child as a unique individual and believe in focussing on the achievement of high levels of wellbeing, self-esteem and enjoyable, autonomous learning within a secure, safe, well planned and stimulating environment.

We foster an 'I can' mind set, and assess what individuals can do to determine the starting point for learning. All children have the right to equality of opportunity and everyone is supported developmentally through all experiences to achieve personal high potentials.

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities.

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those with various linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Provision of a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Accurate Assessment of all children's 'On Entry' Development and Learning Achievements.
- Understanding and observation of each child's development and learning, assessing progress.
- Planning differentiated next step learning opportunities that build upon and extend all children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Planning challenging Continuous curriculum activities that can be accessed by all children, based around their next step developmental learning needs.
- Provision of a wide range of opportunities and resources to motivate and support all individuals and to help them to learn effectively, taking account of 'the characteristics of effective learning'.
- Use of a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Continual monitoring and assessment of children's Formative progress, taking action to provide support as necessary.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children entering our foundation stage on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

At our school we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.

- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are appropriately trained and suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the EYFS and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We aim to provide a happy transition from home to school and work closely with home at all times. We recognise that children's learning and achievements are considerably enhanced when parents and school personnel work in close partnership in a climate of mutual respect, trust and effective two-way communication.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in the Reception class before starting school; providing a 'Parent Pack' and informal Parent Induction Meeting at this time, whilst children are exploring the learning environment with members of our staff (July).
- Following up with a Home Visit after the Summer Holiday, during the first week of the new school year in September- This is a superb opportunity to talk to parents about their child, supporting transition from pre-school to the school environment and discussing what their child is interested in and 'can do'. Dialogue notes, linked to the early learning goals, together with a 'Home Visit child observation' help to support our early evidence towards developmental achievements across the prime and specific areas of learning and development within the EYFS.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- By using Tapestry (online learning journal) sharing regularly children's achievements in school, parents having access at home to their 'Learning Journey' and valuing the on-going contributions to these from parents, and for

parents to record any significant development or achievement at home and upload to Tapestry.

- Inviting Parents to join in with *Celebration, Class* and 'Star of the week' Achievement Assemblies, together with opportunities for parents to talk to the class about anything that might enhance our Topic Knowledge e.g. Dog Grooming or supporting a child to bring in and discuss a pet (Topic: Pets, Animals, Care of Living Creatures).
- Keeping Parents informed, through regular communications, including Curriculum and Event letters.
- Involving parents with their child's learning, encouraging e.g. application of early Mathematics skills at home, phonic practice, word level work and early reading practice at home.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation evenings per year and providing Progress Summaries, together with next step development discussions across all Areas of Learning at each meeting.
- Sharing Summative Assessment: Providing a comprehensive Final Report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

Reception Class Practitioners

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. The two key members of staff- Reception class teacher and HLTA, work together to support all children in the Setting, providing a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners.

The role of all practitioners is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to parents when appropriate, and working in partnership with them.

The Foundation Stage staff meet with pre-school providers when possible to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school.

Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Thus we aim to offer a broad and balanced curriculum following Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, providing Enabling Environments throughout individual stages of learning and development.

The Learning Environment

The Reception classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Within each defined learning area, children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The classroom has an adjacent, fenced in outdoor area, complete with covered canopy and role play shed. Children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

The embedded nature includes effective planning for a continuous curriculum outdoors to incorporate all the areas of learning, reflecting the same quality and variety as offered indoors, and offering provision for regular use of our own Woodland and Nature Garden areas, which our staff and community team have particularly developed. (The woodland can be directly accessed by a gated stile from our own playground). Planning for focussed group activities features outdoor as well as indoor areas, as appropriate. One afternoon per week is specifically timetabled to take place in the woodland environment, following 'Forest School' principles.

See School Policy for Taking Learning Outdoors.

Observation, Assessment and Planning.

We aim to offer a broad and balanced well planned, play based curriculum. Thorough, analytical observations of children engaging with activities and each other; practicing, using and applying their learning, demonstrating their interests -informs planning for next step individual learning. Developing physical, intellectual, social and emotional abilities are taken into account. Children should be encouraged to think and talk about their learning.

The planning within the EYFS is based on the Development Matters statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for their individual learning.

KS1 and EYFS, Topic led Creative Curriculum long term planning allows for cross curricular links, together with continuity and links across key stage learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of work samples and both formal and informal observations, with snapshot photographs. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways, and contribute to the child's individual 'Learning Journey' on Tapestry. At the end of the reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded in the Early Years Foundation

Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

Foundation Stage into KS1

Continuous Curriculum Activity afternoons-merging Yr.1 and Yr.2 with Reception children for *Art/Design Technology/Creative Development* as well as *Science/Knowledge and Understanding* focussed lessons allow for opportunities to develop the outdoor curriculum. Staffing is such that children can utilise informal opportunities to explore and practice their learning as well as being offered small group teacher led focussed activities. Thus active learning is developed through a skills based approach. Children are challenged, involved and engaged in self-chosen activities for sustained periods.

Learning and Development

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

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

We teach children in a balanced way, by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across all the areas of learning and development.

Teaching and Learning Styles

We recognise that features of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;

- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations.

All of the above is incorporated into our practice.

The characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS places much more importance on understanding the way in which young children learn- through 'playing and exploring', 'active learning' and 'creating and thinking critically'. Evidence shows that the nurturing of these characteristics of young children's learning enables them to become effective lifelong learners. We aim to intrinsically link this element of the EYFS to the quality of teaching and learning, reflecting on 'how children learn' and offering quality resource provision.

Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Active Learning

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. Children are provided with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given an opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Through the EYFS we seek to provide a **secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.

Assessment at the end of the EYFS

In the final half term of the school year, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents, carers and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1.

- Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 ELGs as *emerging, expected or exceeding*.
- We provide a brief commentary on the child's skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning.
- EYFS Profile Data is reported to the Local Authority for each child by the end of June each year.
- Relevant School Data, arising from EYFS profile assessment is provided, defining children achieving a 'Good Level of Development'.

Transition to Year 1

The Reception and Year 1 Teachers work closely together to ensure that transition between the EYFS and Year 1 is seamless. All relevant information is discussed to enable Year 1 teachers to plan an effective curriculum and provision for all children.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head teacher/Foundation Stage co-ordinator, Class Teacher, and Higher Level Teaching Assistant take part in monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Policy Reviewed by Paula Cherrington March 2018
Next review date March 2019