



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

This policy represents the agreed principles for teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage at Shepherd Primary School. This policy has been agreed by the Governors and the Senior Leadership Team.

School Aims:

- Our school community (children, staff, parents and governors) aims to:
- Learn and grow together within the safe, caring and happy environment;
- Encourage achievement in all aspects of school life;
- Motivate all children with a broad and challenging curriculum;
- Treat everyone with honesty, respect and tolerance;
- Ensure opportunities for all.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

(EYFS 2014)

1 Characteristics of Young Learners

The Early Years Foundation stage is children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

The Early Year's Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Young children are constantly encountering new experiences and seeking to understand them in order to extend their skills, develop their confidence and build on what they already know. They learn in many different ways. Children deepen their understanding by playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and to each other.

2 Principles

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles.

- It builds on what our children already know and can do and their current interests and needs
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment

3 Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The overarching aim of the Early Years Foundation Stage is to help young children achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution, and achieving economic well-being by:

- Setting the Standards
- Providing for equality of opportunity
- Creating the framework for partnership
- Improving quality and consistency
- Laying a secure foundation for future learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage principles which guide the work of our setting and practice at Shepherd Primary are grouped into 4 distinct themes

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

4 A Unique Child

At Shepherd Primary School 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

4.1 Inclusion

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 we are planning for their learning (see Inclusion Policy).

During the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations to meet the needs of our children, so that the majority of children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and help them to learn effectively
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills

- Monitoring children's progress and providing support (such as speech therapy) as necessary
- Liaise with other agencies to support the children in our care

It is important to us that all children in the setting are 'safe'. We aim to educate children 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 well being of all children.

4.2 Welfare

"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."

(EYFS 2014)

At Shepherd Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. 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 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 setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

5 Positive Relationships

At Shepherd Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

5.1 Parents as Partners

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Making home visits to every child before they start school
- Opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- Offer parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- Having flexible admission arrangements to enable parents and children to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances

- Arranging for children to start school over the first two weeks of term, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school
- Encouraging parents to stay if there are any problems with the child's admission
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents
- Providing various activities that involve parents and inviting parents to parent information workshops, in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking

There is a formal meeting for parents in the autumn and spring terms at which parents discuss their child's progress with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress during the Spring term and at the end of the year.

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. At our school each child has their own 'Key Person' who supports the children and works closely with them throughout the sessions.

6 Enabling Environments

At Shepherd Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

6.1 The Learning Environment

We plan an environment, both indoors and outdoors which provides learning experiences suited to different learning styles, which encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. The setting has its own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

6.2 Sustainability

Through our work towards the Sustainable Schools Award, Shepherd Primary School is committed to being environmentally sustainable and educating our children and wider school community about sustainability for the future.

In moving towards being sustainable, we are attempting to reduce our ecological footprint or to tread more lightly on the Earth. This equates to reducing the amount of resources we use and buy, the waste we produce and the emissions we produce.

In Early Years we promote sustainability and recycling of waste (paper, cardboard and fruit and vegetable waste).

7 Learning and Development

At Shepherd Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

7.1 Teaching and Learning Style

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations and make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and needs, develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self management
- The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment both indoors and outdoors
- The identification, through observations of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents and carers
- The good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage

“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1”

(EYFS 2014)

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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 express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

7.2 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. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

7.3 ICT and the Early Years

The setting has its own bank of ICT resources which are available at all times for children to play and learn with. ICT is used creatively during adult led and child initiated learning.

7.4 Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should be given 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.

7.5 Areas of Learning

"There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and 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.

These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- *communication and language;*
- *physical development; and*
- *personal, social and emotional development.*

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- *literacy;*
- *mathematics;*
- *understanding the world; and*
- *expressive arts and design"*

(EYFS 2014)

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

8 Admissions

Up to 26 pupils join our morning nursery in the year they become 4 years old. All children are offered a place from the September. Where ratios and places allow we are also registered to admit children after the term they are three into our morning nursery. The same staggered induction applies to the Reception classes with one intake occurring in September for those children who turn 5 years old in that academic year. Entry into our primary school is at these times although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.

9 Planning

The Planning within the EYFS follows the achievements, interests and needs of the children, following careful observation of each child and discussions with the parents of the children.

At Shepherd we plan activities which cover and provide the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children need in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their reception year. Every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning experience with opportunities for planned purposeful play and a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities.

Our long term plan focuses on the commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage and coverage in our setting of the 4 main themes – A Unique Child, Positives Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development.

It covers the 16 commitments

- Child Development, Inclusive Practice, Keeping Safe, Health and Well-Being
- Respecting each other, Partners as Parents, Supporting Learning, Key Person
- Observation, Assessment and Planning, Supporting every child, The learning environment, The wider context
- Play and Exploration, Active Learning, Creativity and critical thinking, areas of Learning and development
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Our Medium Term Planning is flexible and highlights the skills and knowledge the children will be gaining through the activities planned. As the weeks progress the planning adapts to suit individual needs and interests and adapts to cover circumstances. Account is taken of previous experience and how concepts, skills, knowledge and attitudes build on this

Our Short Term planning is more detailed and highlights the specific skills and knowledge the children will gain from activities which is appropriate for the children's age and stage.

They contain:

- Specific learning intentions and success criteria
- Differentiated activities where appropriate.
- Focus children and their next steps.
- Key vocabulary to be taught and language to be used, including the word of the week.
- Adult deployment.
- Opportunity to evaluate the tasks / activities

The Format of Short-Term planning sheets is continually being reviewed within the setting, making adaptations and trying out new ideas. We also plan for both indoor and outdoor child initiated learning

10 Assessment

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Learning Journals'.

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. The Early Years Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves both the teacher and

other adults, as appropriate. We are using the assessment for planning pro-formas which link our observations to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The collection of assessment data in the Early Years Profile is a statutory requirement.

Nursery and Reception children are assessed on entry and at the end of each term using Ages and Stages criteria. The data is entered onto the Herts EYFS toolkit to track children's progress. The data is analysed and used to inform future planning.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners 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. The Profile must reflect: ongoing observation; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals (see Section 1). Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile.

Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These should inform a dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Schools must share the results of the Profile with parents and/or carers, and explain to them when and how they can discuss the Profile with the teacher who completed it. For children attending more than one setting, the Profile must be completed by the school where the child spends most time. If a child moves to a new school during the academic year, the original school must send their assessment of the child's level of development against the early learning goals to the relevant school within 15 days of receiving a request. If a child moves during the summer term, relevant providers must agree which of them will complete the Profile.
(EYFS 2014)

Parents receive two reports in Reception and one in nursery. They offer brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these and send them to parents before our termly parent consultation meetings where the parents have a chance to talk through their children's report with us.

11 Induction and Transfer

Nursery

New children are invited to visit, with their parent or carer and are introduced to their key person and a start date is given to individuals. The key person talks about the nursery setting and routines. The nursery teacher will also visit the children in their pre-school setting and make home visits before the children start.

There is a staggered daily intake over 1 or 2 weeks, depending on the number of children starting. Opportunity is given for additional visits for any children where it is felt necessary.

Parents are encouraged to leave their children after a short while on their first day but this is sensitively & carefully managed if necessary.

Reception

Children's end of Nursery year reports are transferred to Reception, as are assessment sheets, baseline information, targets, Learning Journals and any IEP's. Practitioners from Nursery and Reception meet to discuss the needs of the children.

The Early Years work together as a close team so a smooth transition is made easier for the children as both the environment and the practitioners are familiar to them leaving them to adjust to the longer sessions.

Parents / carers are invited to a meeting with Reception practitioners at the end of the term prior to their child transferring into Reception. The Reception teacher will also visit the children in their pre-school/nursery setting and make home visits to children that have not attended Shepherd Primary School Nursery, before the children start.

To help the children settle into the new routines and longer days we stagger their entry. The children start in school for mornings only, staying for lunch for up to a week then stay full time.

12 Monitoring and Review

The Early Years Phase leader is responsible for the EYFS and will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback, raising any issues that require discussion.

This policy is monitored by the governing body, and will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.