



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Introduction

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.

Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation stage, 2021

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five. It sets the standards for learning development and care of children in registered settings and schools. All children join Sparkwell All Saints Primary School at the beginning of the school year in which they are five - compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.

Children joining our school have already learned a great deal in the first few years of life. Most, if not all, have been to local pre-school settings. The education we offer our children in the Foundation Stage is based on the following principles:

- It creates a classroom atmosphere of warmth and security that enables and encourages pupils to socialise and learn.
- It recognises children as active learners and encourages their independence
- It builds on what our children already know and can do
- It recognises that each child is unique and ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content and activities that provide creative opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment that fosters children's creativity
- It will prepare children for making a successful transition into Key Stage One

Aims and objectives

Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching. Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children's learning. Children in the early years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning. A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy.

Development Matters 2021

Opportunities are provided for practical activities, which are interesting, enjoyable, challenging and based on first hand experiences. These opportunities are linked to the seven areas of learning for the foundation stage and provide the practise, consolidation and extension of skills, knowledge and understanding. We aim to encourage all pupils to explore, experiment, question, take risks, make and learn from mistakes and engage in purposeful play. We are aware of the need to provide equal opportunities in all areas of the foundation stage and every effort is made to promote a positive attitude to learning. Children with special needs have access to the same curriculum and

where necessary, will have an Individual Education Plan and additional support provided by the EYFS team.

EYFS overarching principles

The EYFS is underpinned by four overarching principles.

- **A unique child**

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- **Positive relationships**

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

- **Enabling environments**

Children learn to develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

- **Learning and development**

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

The principle of ‘learning and development’ contains within it the ‘characteristics of effective early learning’. These 3 key characteristics of how children can learn and develop are key to the whole curriculum and are fostered to support children’s growth. They are:

- **Playing and exploring**
- **Active learning**
- **Creating and thinking critically**

The EYFS curriculum (framework)

The curriculum aims to address all of the 7 areas of learning as follows:

The 3 prime areas:

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

The 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. We aim to provide engaging experiences and strong relationships with children to allow the prime areas to develop quickly and support learning in all other areas. We believe the prime areas continue to be fundamental throughout the EYFS and are vital to enable effective learning in the specific areas.

In 2021 changes have been made to the EYFS curriculum, there is a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary, with more examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across all 7 areas and through broader ages and stages.

The four specific areas include essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas, and provide important contexts for learning. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities and project based learning sessions. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

The approach is based on flexibility, awareness of individual needs, and on learning through play and first-hand experience.

The curriculum is:

- Broad and balanced and promotes children's social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual development.
- Delivered in a fun way so that learning takes place with enjoyment and celebration of achievements.
- Designed to be flexible within a framework for long, medium and short term planning.
- Developed to foster multicultural links wherever possible.

The 3 Prime Areas:

Communication and Language (CL)

Communication and Language focuses on two aspects: 'Listening, Attention and Understanding' and 'Speaking'. Through role-play, circle-time, project learning and indoor and outdoor opportunities, pupils develop their use of speech and language in the classroom. Children are encouraged to work in groups and develop turn-taking skills alongside listening and understanding skills. They are given opportunities to discuss events in their lives with the rest of the class and regularly share any new developments from their Tapestry journals with the rest of the group. Children are prompted to question and explore their experiences as well as those of others and it is the aim of adults in the class to gradually take a step back from conversations and allow children to manage their own questions and answer sessions.

Physical Development (PD)

Physical development looks at two aspects: 'Gross Motor Skills' and 'Fine Motor Skills'. We believe that the physical development of young children needs to be encouraged through the provision of opportunities for them to be active and to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. Children will also engage in activities to develop and further refine their small motor skills. These include activities like threading and sewing, woodwork, small world toys, dough disco and physical movements to music. These activities are particularly encouraged at the start of the school year to help children develop the skills needed for writing .

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

This prime area covers three aspects: 'Self regulation', 'Managing Self' and 'Building relationships'. Children are encouraged to explore their feelings and behaviour and develop resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge. They learn to discuss their own and other's behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. We believe children develop effectively when they are confident to work in groups and try new activities, talk about them, work cooperatively, take turns, and say when they do and do not need help. We maintain that the Personal, Social and Emotional Development of a child is exceptionally important to their development and support children's development through daily practice in conflict resolution, team work, group projects and 'circle time' to foster respect for one another's own views and concerns. As part of the 'Managing Self' element, children are supported to develop an

understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food and lifestyle as well as personal hygiene and oral health. Children are encouraged to manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully, including dressing, undressing and going to the toilet independently.

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021

The 4 Specific Areas:

Literacy (Lit)

Literacy is broken down into: 'Comprehension', 'Word reading' and 'Writing'. A great emphasis is put on the excitement and enjoyment to be found in books. Stories are read at least once a day by the EYFS team. Books from a variety of genres and cultures are used to inspire and motivate the first steps to reading. Class and individual books are often made by the children and put in the book corner to be enjoyed by everyone. Pre-reading skills are also fostered through games and puzzles etc. We use a systematic phonics teaching scheme approach following the Government's guidance with use of the Read Write Inc resources. This gives a strong base for both reading and writing skills. A variety of writing mediums are used to promote writing around the classroom such as whiteboards, chalks, pencils, felt tips, crayons and paint.

Mathematics (Mat)

Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, 2021

Mathematics consists of: 'Number' and 'Numerical Patterns'. Children are supported to develop their understanding and knowledge of Mathematics through using it as an integral part of daily experiences. Through a wide variety of practical experiences children are given the opportunity to explore and develop a deep understanding of numbers to 10 and discover concepts relating to space, distance, weight, size, shape, mobility and force. Mathematics is mainly taught through play based activities as well as teacher-led class sessions and small group sessions. Mathematics is explored using a variety of mediums including; sand and water play, songs and story time, role play, junk modelling, outside exploration and sorting, classifying, comparing, sequencing and

observing as well as taught number activities. All of these skills the children can then practise through problem solving activities.

Understanding the World (UW)

Understanding the World focuses on: 'People, Culture and communities', 'The Natural world' and 'Past and Present'. Children are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world around them. We achieve this in a variety of ways. We will encourage children to undertake real-life experiments, create a stimulating environment that offers a range of experiences to encourage children's curiosity and interest. We also invite families and carers to share their experiences of the wider world and use correct terms / vocabulary and ask open-ended questions. In our planning we create opportunities that encourage exploration, experimentation, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision making and discussion. The use of topics provides opportunities to discuss historical events and annual celebrations and festivals as well as charity events, allowing the children an opportunity to find out more about different cultures and world events. We encourage children to talk about and reflect upon their experiences and also believe that supporting children's growing understanding of RE is essential to their personal growth.

Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

This specific area covers: 'Creating with materials' and 'Being imaginative and Expressive'. Children's creativity is extended with practitioner support to develop their curiosity, exploration and play. Children are provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play experiences. They are supported in their exploration of a variety of materials, tools and techniques and experiment with colour, design, texture, form and function. We achieve this by valuing what children can do, providing a stimulating environment where creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued and allowing time for children to explore and express their ideas.

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 Foundation Stage takes the form of formal and informal observations and talking with children. This involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. The children are also actively encouraged to self-evaluate which happens on a daily basis.

Each child has an online 'Tapestry' learning journey to record some of their key achievements, milestones and activities in school and at home. Each child's Tapestry account is used to continually assess the child, along with practitioner knowledge, against the Early Learning Goals and the steps towards them in the Development Matters document. The Foundation Stage Profile Early Learning Goals are used in June to formally assess their attainment within the Early Years Foundation Stage. The DfE will be sent a summary of each child's achievement profile in June / July each year. We share the Foundation Stage Profile information with parents in the end of year report, which also includes a short statement against the 7 areas of learning. These statements help show how each child learns individually and aid both parents and the Year 1 teacher in supporting the next steps of progress.

Equal opportunities and differentiation

In our school we believe that all our children are unique. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of abilities when planning for their learning. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic but challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that they can achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception and so some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the individual needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Our indoor and outdoor classroom

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials, equipment and plan activities that reflect both the community 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 Foundation Stage pupils have access to a large enclosed, outdoor area that benefits from a range of equipment. This outdoor space reflects and promotes each area of Foundation Stage learning.

Our learning areas are reviewed regularly to ensure that they provide an attractive environment that meets statutory requirements. They are designed to be inviting, enabling and welcoming. Both the indoor and outdoor classrooms are divided up into areas of learning including, for example, a writing area, a numeracy area and a reading area.

We also make good use of weekly **Forest School** and onsite forest school activities to support children in the development of their knowledge and skills and to support the teaching of our values of creativity, resilience, responsibility and respect.

Role of the teacher

To undertake responsibility of the Foundation Stage in order to:

- Devise and update the Foundation Stage policy; advise on the standards and development of the Foundation Stage within the annual School Development Plan; convene whole or part staff meetings as/when required to do so; lead staff development and support in-service training; liaise with the EYFS trustee as required.
- Monitor and evaluate learning within the Foundation Stage in line with the school's monitoring cycle.
- Collate and analyse information relating to the standards achieved in the Foundation Stage and present to staff or governors.
- Secure, support and allocate the resources necessary to deliver the Foundation Stage curriculum within an allocated budget.
- Contribute to the formulation and evaluation of the school's assessment practice in relation to the Foundation Stage.
- Keep up to date with current trends by reading documents and attending courses.

Transition

We believe that transitional times are essential in supporting children's development. Children in Reception class experience two key transitional times; entering Reception (from nursery/home) at the start of the year, and then transitioning to Year 1 at the end of the year.

We believe the transition into Reception at the start of the year is of huge significance and great care is taken to manage it effectively and provide children with a positive experience of their new school and key staff.

We aim to support this key process in a number of ways, including:

- Visiting children at home – The class teacher and another member of staff will aim to visit each child at home before they start school so they can meet in an environment where the child feels safe and secure.
- Visiting feeder pre-schools – Staff from Sparkwell All Saints Primary School visit feeder pre-school settings and read short stories or play alongside children in a familiar setting; it is also an opportunity to speak to the setting staff who know them well.
- On-site visits – In the Spring and Summer terms children from the neighbouring Montessori Nursery start to join in with some activities in the reception class during the school day. Children from other pre-schools are welcome to do this as well should their staff arrange and support the process.
- We hold a series of visits during the 2nd half of the summer term, these will be on different days and at different times but will usually be about 6 sessions. We aim to include sessions that include lunch and playtime and parents are invited to come along with their child to a forest school session or a trip to Dartmoor Zoo. Parents are encouraged to leave their child, but if this is difficult they are welcome to stay in school; during some of the visits the school offers meeting time to cover topics such as phonics or a visit from the school nurse.

The transition from Reception to Year 1 is important and children will be provided with opportunities in the Summer term to have lessons in the Year 1/2 class and with the staff working there. We also arrange for the KS1 teacher to spend time in the EYFS classroom during the summer term.

Role of parents

We believe that parents have an important and beneficial role to play in the education of their child; education should be a collaboration between teacher and parent. Parents will be encouraged to work with us on a daily basis and make time to assist their child with weekly home learning tasks. We aim to foster home-school links through:

- Meeting all our children and parents at a number of events prior to their child beginning school.
- Engaging in comments between parents and staff through the online Tapestry Learning Journal, and encouraging parents to add their own evidence and activities to their child's Journal.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns - there is an official opportunity for parents to formally meet the teacher termly during the school year and parents receive an end of year report on their child's attainment.
- Being available at the beginning and end of the school day to talk to parents about their child.
- Arranging activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents such as encouraging parents to assist on school trips or inviting them in to see shows or displays.

- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents such as inviting parents in to discuss their experiences.
- Blogging to inform parents of the kind of work the children will be undertaking.

EYFS Safeguarding

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.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021

The school maintains Safeguarding Policies that cover all major areas (See 'Safeguarding Policy' and 'Safer Recruitment Policy').

The use of cameras

The use of photographic and video evidence within an Early Years setting is essential and used as a key assessment and monitoring tool. Photos in particular are taken regularly to support assessment, form evidence in Learning Journeys, and provide children with a reflective look at their own play and activities. We are sensitive to the confidentiality concern photographs and video footage carry and all adults within Reception class follow the guidelines set out in our policy 'The Use of Photos in School'.

The use of mobile phones

Adults within Reception class do not carry mobile phones with them whilst children are in their care. The only exception to this is when children are working off-site. In this instance, mobile phones are used for instant access to the emergency services should there be an accident and for communication between staff and volunteers. Mobile phones are not to be used to store photographs or videos of students outside of the school or at an off-site activity environment, in the rare occasion a camera is not available and a school staff member takes a photo on their camera it will be deleted as soon as it has been transferred or printed.

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