



EYFS (EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE) POLICY FOR SHAKESPEARE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

To be reviewed: Annually

Adopted by Governors: March 2010

To go to: Curriculum Committee

Approved by Governors: January 2024

Most recent amendment and review: January 2024

Contents

- Introduction and Definitions
- The Learning Process and the context of the Early Years Curriculum
- Aims and Principles of Early Years Education
- An appropriate Curriculum for the Foundation Stage
- Areas of Learning & Development DFE/QCA Early Learning Goals
- Pre-school Induction
- Early Years Development Profile
- Sources

Introduction and definitions

The Purpose of the Early Years Policy

The Early Years policy reflects the value and importance of early years education, both during and beyond the Foundation Stage. It provides a framework for staff, which gives guidance on practice, and outlines procedures for planning, teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The policy contributes towards raising educational standards within the school and ensures that the needs of the youngest children are met within the context of whole school policies, curriculum planning, agreed teaching approaches and organisational structures. The Early Years curriculum has been developed in accordance with DfE Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage including the Early Years and Every Child Matters principles.

The Early Years Policy addresses all aspects of the needs of young children and ensures that:

- Early years education is valued, seen as the foundation for education and the beginning of a continuum of learning throughout the primary phase.
- The curriculum experiences of children are appropriate to their age and stage of development.
- The identification of and provision for special educational needs of children are included.
- The importance of 'play' and 'first hand' experiences are recognised in planning learning opportunities for young children.
- There is shared understanding of the emotional needs of young children and how they learn.
- Policies and schemes of work include teaching and learning from 4-11.
- The needs of the children are considered carefully in matters of organisation, management and administration.
- Children experience a smooth transition from home. Pre-school or nursery, into the Reception class.
- Statutory curricular obligations and the requirements of baseline assessment are met.

Early Years Provision

Early Years provision at Shakespeare is organised into two shared classrooms to accommodate 60 pupils aged 4-5, which share access to the two outside play areas (that are risk assessed each day by staff) and toilet facilities. Each class has their own base during carpet sessions. This helps with routine and consistency. Throughout the day, children are able to access all areas of provision. A range of indoor/outdoor equipment and resources are available to meet the needs of the children and they also have access to other equipment and facilities throughout the school e.g. halls, library, nature garden etc.

All Reception age children are admitted annually in September.

Staff aim to create a welcoming, happy and relaxed environment which enables parents to feel confident in their role as a partner in their children's education.

Teaching and learning in the early years' curriculum is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs. Staff organise a range of experiences and opportunities based on 'real' events, which give children chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups and explore the school and community environment.

The Foundation Stage

The Early Years curriculum is based on the Statutory Framework for the Early Year's Foundation Stage, revised 2021 and is planned to lead smoothly into the National Curriculum at KS1 in a way which is meaningful and relevant for all children. The Foundation Stage curriculum stresses the importance of the child's personal, social and emotional development, communication and language development and physical development. It also emphasises early literacy, mathematics and lays the foundation for the future learning of all children.

The Foundation curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning & development;

All areas are important and inter-connected

There are **3 PRIME AREAS-**

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

There are **4 SPECIFIC AREAS-** through which the Prime Areas are strengthened and applied.

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

Underpinning this there are four themes and principles which reflect effective Early Year's practice.

- **A unique child** - Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive relationships** - Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person
- **Enabling environments** - The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.
- **Learning and development** - Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and all Areas of Learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

We recognise that children's learning is holistic and that children neither recognise nor benefit from being confined within subject boundaries. We aim to provide a coherent curriculum, which provides a clear focus for learning and draws together relevant activities which contribute to the development of the whole child. Thus, children are able to use and extend what they know, can do and understand within a realistic context. The importance of play - play helps children explore ideas, role and relationships. Appropriately planned and structured play supports and develops children's need to socialise express ideas, thoughts and feelings, experiment, observe and try things out.

Practitioners work towards children achieving expected or above levels in most aspects of the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. The Early Learning Goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage, but are not intended to be a curriculum in themselves. The Early Learning Goals are in line with the objectives for both the National Mathematics and Literacy curriculum; Reception teachers may choose to cover the elements of the strategies across the day, rather than in a single unit of time, until the end of reception year.

The Learning Process and the Context of the Early Years Curriculum

The Characteristics of very young children

During their first seven years, young children grow and develop rapidly and are therefore particularly receptive learners.

Whilst young children do follow recognised patterns of development, within any group of under fives there will be considerable variation between individuals. A six-month age difference at this stage is developmentally much more significant than a similar age difference in a group of older children. The younger the children, the more important it is that their individual learning needs are identified and planned for, and the less appropriate it is to expect them to conform within a large group. Although, with skill and sensitivity, it is possible for educators to plan experiences and activities that may profitably be shared by a group.

Very young children have very little life experience to draw upon to help them make sense of the world around them, and to enable them to cope with new demands. Early years teachers, as well as parents and carers, need to offer young children the social and emotional support they need during their first years at school, to help them to adjust to temporary separation from their family; to the new social context in which they find themselves, and to the range of new experiences and challenges they encounter within the educational setting. This support is vital if children are to feel confident and secure enough to learn.

During the early years, children gain a great deal from interaction with others, both adults and children. As the child moves from the close relationship of family life into new situations such as nursery, playgroup or reception class, the close involvement of parents can supply both important continuity for the child and information for the educator about the child's interests, experiences and needs.

Establishing a partnership with the home at this early stage provides a firm foundation on which subsequent educators can build.

The needs of young children are interrelated, and it is not possible, nor sensible, to separate their need for learning experiences from their need for care and emotional support.

As the children grow older, their need for physical care at school lessens as they become increasingly independent and more able to use past experience to help them make sense of new expectations or challenges.

The Learning Process

From the moment they are born, young children learn through their spontaneous interactions with their immediate environment and with the people around them. The quality of these interactions will inevitably vary and it is the role of the educator to foster the disposition to learn and encourage the child to continue to express curiosity and interest.

Early years teachers have an important role to play in nurturing young children's learning. Teachers need to value and pursue the ideas and activities which young children are drawn towards, to create successful learning situations for individuals and small groups of children.

Young children are generally naturally curious, they want to know why and how things are what they are. They ask a lot of questions and need immediate and appropriate responses. This demands adults who are willing to talk to and answer the child clearly, thoughtfully, accurately, and in such a way that leads to further thought and questions. Children's imagination can be nurtured by responding to their curiosity. With appropriate encouragement and stimulation, this curiosity will develop into a desire for, and enjoyment of learning.

All young children need periods of uninterrupted time in which they can actively explore their environment, set their own challenges, and make their own discoveries. They need opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers, and they need adults who are able to sensitively 'step in' to extend their natural interest.

Young children are generally active learners, operating most effectively through first hand experience. They make sense of the world and acquire skills by exploring objects, materials and emotions in situations which have meaning for them.

For young children purposeful play is an essential and potentially rich part of the learning process. Play is a powerful motivator, encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Through play young children explore, apply and try out what they know and can do. They also dare to take risks, negotiate, solve problems, initiate, modify and consolidate their knowledge and understanding.

The Learning Context

Each child starts school with a unique set of experiences gained at home and in his or her community.

A learning environment should respond to each child's need for something familiar, something new and challenging and something which enables him or her to pursue a current interest. A classroom environment and daily programme which offer maximum choice to individual children in terms of access to equipment and space, use of time and opportunities for collaboration with others is most appropriate.

A well conceived, well organised, and resourced learning environment, which provides opportunities for discovery across all areas of learning, is the best means of encouraging personal autonomy and a sense of responsibility. All resources and equipment must be presented and stored in such a way as to be easily accessible to young children and may be used in flexible and imaginative ways.

It is the task of early year's teachers to ensure that the learning context they provide offers a rich and stimulating environment which reflects the needs and interests of young children and provides appropriate opportunities for the children to meet new challenges as well as to practise and consolidate developing skills and concepts.

Aims and Principles of Early Years Education

Young children as learners

We believe that -

- Although all children follow sequential patterns of development, every child is unique.
- All children have competencies, which need to be brought out and built upon.
- Young children's learning should be embedded in what is familiar.

- Play is an essential and rich part of the learning process.
- Learning should be a pleasurable and rewarding experience.
- Learning should primarily be first hand, experiential and active. Young children need opportunities and space to explore and discover.
- Young children are social beings and learning should take place in a social context.
- Talk is central to the learning process. It should be reciprocal and often initiated by the child.
- Children's independence and autonomy needs to be promoted. Children should be encouraged to take responsibility for their learning.
- Self discipline should be encouraged.
- Young children need the security of an appropriate daily routine.
- There should be opportunities to explore the unexpected.
- There should be opportunities for sustained engagement in an activity.

The context of learning

We believe that -

- For young children, every setting is a source of learning and the home is a particularly powerful learning environment.
- The content and setting of learning should, as far as possible, reflect the child's social and cultural background.
- The child should feel valued and a positive self-concept should be promoted which acknowledges the value of each child's cultural and religious life.
- The teaching environment should be open and accessible to the children.
- Space for young children to move about and explore is essential.
- A variety of learning situations is important.
- Certain facilities (e.g., access to an outdoor play area, adjacent toilets, and adequate space) are essential for the education and care of young children.
- Young children need materials and equipment that is appropriate and promotes their learning.
- The learning environment should be 'user-friendly', secure, comfortable and stimulating.
- A child's growing social competence needs support.
- Collaboration with parents in a child's learning is essential.
- All those involved in the learning process should be viewed as partners, and should collaborate in planning the curriculum.
- The role of the adult is highly significant in the learning process and a favourable ratio of adults to young children is critical.
- All educators operate within the context of their own values, beliefs and attitudes. They need to recognise that these may differ from those of the children they are educating.

Educators of young children need to be open-minded, evaluative, reflective and responsive.

The content of learning

We believe that -

- Young children need a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- Young children's development should be viewed as a whole and the curriculum should reflect an understanding of this.

- Observation based assessment involving all practitioners within the setting is a key element in planning an appropriate curriculum for every child.
- The process of learning is as important as the content and needs careful consideration in curriculum planning.
- Children need certain skills and concepts in order to make sense of, and apply, their knowledge and understanding.
- The development of positive attitudes to learning should be a specific aim.
- Much knowledge can, and should be presented in an integrated, cross-curricular way, depending on the children's experience.
- There should be continuity and progression and a co-ordinated approach to planning should be encouraged.

An appropriate curriculum for the Foundation Stage

Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum for very young children needs to reflect the aims and principles outlined in the school's early years policy and it should-

- Place emphasis on personal, social and emotional development; recognising the importance of self-confidence, self-esteem and collaboration. This is further developed through whole school opportunities such as assemblies, celebrations, workshops, educational visits.
- Provide opportunities for children to make responsible choices from among a wide range of activities and to develop interdependence.
- Provide opportunities for intellectual development through structured learning experiences, which start from what the child already knows, understands and can do.
- Recognise the contribution of play in the development of children's language and social skills, and in enabling them to explore and experiment.
- Be planned on the basis of observing, assessing and recording individual children's learning, development and achievements.
- Provide continuity with what has gone before as well as future educational demands.
- Ensure equal access for every child and challenge discrimination and stereotyping.
- Be planned and delivered according to current guidelines for the Foundation Stage and Early Learning Goals.

Curriculum Planning

The Early Years Curriculum is planned from the 'Development Matters' Framework. From this framework, at the beginning of each term, a list of essential 'skills points' is created based on the needs/ ability of the cohort. The skills points may change year to year. Achievement of these skills points forms part of weekly planning. These elements determine what is taught and when it happens. The curriculum plans for the Foundation Stage are also based on the stages highlighted by the development matters stages provided in the framework and the staff's knowledge and understanding of how children develop and learn. They recognise that young children follow recognised patterns of development but that there is considerable variation between individuals. The weekly plans give aims, learning objectives, teaching methods, assessment opportunities and the resources necessary for the activity.

Weekly plans include what children are to be taught in specific sessions, how staff are organised and how resources are to be used. Evaluation of activities, observation and staff listening to, and talking with children, are key strategies for gaining information on each child's progress and development. Key worker groups are created and planned for so children spend time each week with their key worker, working on a variety of activities which cover the areas of learning.

In the first six weeks of school, all children must complete a statutory baseline assessment (RBA). The data is then submitted online. This provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils between reception and the end of primary school. The results of these baselines will be held with DfE. The setting also attends an annual moderation, either externally or internally.

Recording pupil progress takes place in a variety of ways - skills assessment, observation, focused activities, questioning and discussion; these records inform future planning and are also the basis for reporting to parents. Reporting to parents takes place through interviews at two Parents Evenings where parents are invited into school to discuss their child's achievements, interests and experiences, and also annually through a written report. Parents are also invited into school for open afternoons where they have the opportunity to look through Learning Journeys alongside their child and class teacher. 'Class Dojo' is used as an interactive home/school communication tool. Class Dojo enables teachers/ parents to communicate about their child's personal learning or next step challenges.

Pre-school Induction

Starting school is an important time for young children their parents, families and teachers, and an appropriate induction programme is essential.

The efforts that parents and staff have made in advance always pay dividends once the children are admitted into school.

By working together to prepare the way, parents and children know what to expect and the class teachers and teaching assistants know enough about each child to ensure that they can be sensitive to individual needs. It is perhaps worth remembering however, that induction is a process we do **with** children and parents and not **to** them.

Aims of the Pre-school Induction Programme

- To make the transition from home to school more sensitive and appropriate to the needs of the children and their parents.
- To establish and maintain good relationships between all those involved in the process of 'settling in' to school.
- To develop a pattern of induction that is able to build upon children's previous experiences e.g. playgroup, nursery, mother and toddler group.

Arrangements for Pre-school Induction

Once the applications for the forthcoming intake are finalised contact will be made with the families. This includes visits to the child's home and, if applicable, nursery/playground to establish early links with the child and their carers and also highlights any potential problems. Parents are invited to link to 'Class Dojo' as soon as

their child has a confirmed place. They can communicate with EYFS teachers straight away.

Meetings for Parents of New Entrants

1. General Meeting (Headteacher)

- Welcome and introduction of parents to the KS1 leader, EYFS lead teacher, EYFS teachers, the Business Manager, our Family Learning Mentor, a school governor, a parent representing the school's PTFA (The Friends of Shakespeare) and our SENDCO.
- Outline of admission and induction programme.
- Outline of school's philosophy and organisation.
- Basic information e.g. dinners, times of the school day, attendance, holidays, uniform, P.E. kit, milk.
- Parental involvement
- Talk about general issues relating to life in school.
- Talk by Business Manager

2. The Early years curriculum

- Principles and practice in the Early Years
- The organisation and delivery of the Foundation Stage Curriculum.
- Reception Baseline Assessment and completion of the Lancashire Tracker.
- Ideas for helping children's learning at home.

3. The practicalities of starting school

- Parents as partners in the education of their children
- Helping children to cope with the practical aspects of school life - hanging coats on pegs, having a handkerchief, naming all items of clothing etc.
- Pump bags and reading bags.
- Illness, medicines and registers.
- The School Day.
- Classroom routines and procedures.
- Where to go on preliminary visits/ the first day.
- How to ask to go to the toilet.
- Cafeteria system of school lunches.
- Parent's concerns.

'Starting school' - An Information Pack for parents

The pack contains -

- School brochure
- 'Before your child starts school' leaflet
- Description of RWI and a lower-case letter formation sheet
- Number formation rhyme leaflet

Additional parent sessions are delivered by the EYFS teachers on how to support their children in early Literacy and Mathematics.

Visits to Classrooms/Class teachers

- Formal arrangements are made for new entrants and their families to visit their new classroom and meet their class teacher at the end of June.

- Teachers conduct home visits (by request) and nursery visits, also at the end of June.
- On our school moving up day in July, children attend a two-hour 'Stay and Play' session.

Admission in September

- The day prior to their first day at school, children attend a settling in session in their nursery groups.
- Immediately after the settling in session, the children begin on a full-time basis.
- Children are made familiar with their surroundings (where to hang coats, which entrance to use, where to put their lunch box, reading bag, drink etc.)
- Children attend all sessions on their own as families drop them off at the EYFS gate and children are settled by EY staff.

The Early Years Development Profile

At present, the baseline data is submitted online to the RBA. From then progress is tracked using our own developed tracking grid format, based on the age bands from Development Matters, along with other assessments and records received from nursery to record the children's progress throughout the reception year.

Baseline assessment and continuing record sheets

On entry the children are assessed by the practitioners and information is recorded through the RBA online. The content here has been developed to assist Early Years staff as they gather information to support the child's development in the Areas of Learning and Development and the Early Learning Goals. The assessments made provide both formative and diagnostic information for the class teacher; identifying a child's strengths and learning needs, including any special educational needs and enabling the teacher to plan appropriate teaching and learning activities to best meet the child's need. Children identified as needing SEND support are referred to the school's SENDCO and may receive additional input from within school.

Information is gathered and presented in a 'user-friendly'/'child-friendly' format and it is our intention that wherever possible the most common mode of assessment used is observations taken on post sticks/ observation sheets and photographs during normal classroom activities. This will be accompanied by focused assessment tasks that Foundation Stage staff will undertake with small groups or individuals.

Such statutory baseline assessment (RBA) will take place during the child's first few weeks in school. The child's attainments in the subsequent months of the reception year will then be added to the Sonar assessment database as children progress towards K.S.1. and the data is reviewed at three set points to assess individual children's progress and identify any areas for development. The final assessments will be entered into the Sonar system and the RBA online database and passed to Year 1 teachers.

Parents Bulletin

Parents are informed of their children's learning via the class page on the school website and Class Dojo. This is designed to promote regular informal contact between school and parents/carers on curriculum activities in the Early Years Classroom and how they may perhaps support their child's learning. Class dojo is also used to update parents on how they can help their children at home.

Learning Journeys

In addition, each child has a 'Learning Journey' folder where children's work is stored throughout the year. These folders are shared at parents' evenings and open afternoons. Parents also have the opportunity to comment in the learning journeys. At the end of the year the children take their work home to keep.

Sources

'Starting with Quality' (The Rumbold Report) DFEE 1990

'Aspects of Primary Education; the Education of children under five' DFEE 1989

'Desirable Outcomes for Children's Learning on entering compulsory education' SCAA 1996

'Early Learning Goals' DFEE/QCA 1999

'The Early Year's Foundation Stage curriculum' DFES 2007

'The Early Years Curriculum' Early Years Curriculum Group 1995

'Early Admission to school of Four year old children' Lancashire County Council 1984

'Early Childhood Education' Tina Bruce 1987

'Starting together Early Years Development Pack' Lancashire County Council 1996

'Guidelines for working with children under 5' Lancashire County Council 1998

'Play and Learning guidance for the Foundation Stage' Lancashire County Council 2000

Reviewed February 2010 Mrs Ellis

Amended Mar 2010 by Governors

Reviewed Mar 2011 by Governors

Amended & Reviewed by Governors March 12

Reviewed and updated by Mrs Ellis February 2013

Reviewed by Governors March 13

Reviewed by Governors March 14

Reviewed by Governors Feb 15

Amended and updated by Miss Mooney & Mrs Ellis Feb 16 Approved by Governors Feb 16

Updated by Miss Mooney Feb 17 and approved by Governors 7th Feb 2017

Reviewed & amended by Miss Mooney Jan 2018, Approved by Governors 23rd Jan 2018

Reviewed and amended by Miss Mooney Jan 2019

Reviewed by Miss Mooney January 2020

Reviewed and amended by Miss Mooney January 2021

Reviewed and amended by Miss Mooney January 2022

Reviewed and amended by Miss Hayton & Miss Treece-Birch Jan 2023

Reviewed and amended by Miss Hayton & Miss Treece-Birch Jan 2024