



EYFS Policy

Approved by: Gemma Sandercock

Date: October 2023

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by: October 2024

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Rationale

“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 EYFS 2023, p.5)

At Sherwell Valley, the Early Years Foundation Stage is viewed as a distinctive phase of education which integrates the care and education of our youngest children. We believe that the children are unique and bring a wide range of diverse experiences and learning which must be built upon. It is vital that parents are valued as children’s first educators and that they are active in the child’s school education.

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage EYFS that applies from September 2023

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1170108/EYFS_framework_from_September_2023.pdf

Our Core Purpose

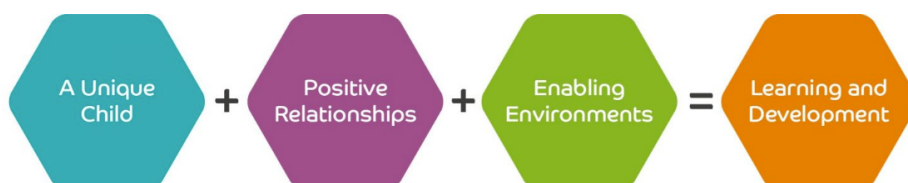
At Sherwell Valley, we provide highly effective teaching and learning within a culture of challenge, nurture and support. We support all children to make progress to be the best they can be. Our curriculum enable as many children as possible to achieve a Good Level of Development by the end of their time in the EYFS, which is then built upon

Principles

Our EYFS policy is related to our school vision, values and curriculum statement. It documents further aims and strategies we employ in order to address the four overarching principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and supporting adults who respond to their individual interest and need to help them to build their learning over time.
- We recognise the importance of all areas of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. Our practice is informed by the EYFS framework and covers the education and care of all children in the EYFS.

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage that applies from September 2023.



- To establish clear guidelines for the education of children in the Foundation Stage.
- To ensure a coherent educational programme appropriate to the needs and stages of development of each child.
- To ensure quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress.
- To ensure a safe and secure environment in which children can play, explore, experiment, develop confidence and curiosity and learn.

Our carefully planned curriculum, quality interactions and use of assessment ensure that we address the seven key features of effective practise:

- providing the best for every child
- offering consistent, high quality care for all
- Planning a curriculum that develops children's skills as well as supporting their interests.
- using a range of different approaches to ensure our pedagogy is effective.
- implementing a range of assessment strategies to check what children have learnt in order to inform future planning.
- support children to develop their self regulation.
- Develop a strong partnership with parents through positive and regular communication.

Structure of the EYFS at Sherwell Valley.

We offer 3 hour or 6 hour sessions, 5 days a week for children aged 2, 3 and 4 years old in our nursery. Our reception children start full time school at the start of the academic year in which they are 5 years old.

The Areas of Teaching and Learning

Our early years setting follows the curriculum outline in the 2023 EYFS statutory framework. The framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected sections.

The three prime areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving.

These are the prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through the 4 specific areas.

The specific areas are:

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

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development.** Children are to be provided with experiences which will help and support them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others. Activities will be provided that promote emotional, moral and social development together with intellectual development.
- **Communication and Language.** Children will be supported to become competent communicators, speakers and listeners. Children are encouraged to use these skills in a range of situations and for a variety of purposes, being supported in developing the confidence to do so. Language and communication groups/ activities happen daily to ensure confident and competent

speakers. We use the 'NELI' Speech and Language intervention programme to help to improve children's early language and literacy skills.

- **Literacy.** 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 through the Read Write Inc programme, 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).
- **Mathematics.** Children will be encouraged to gradually know and use numbers and to count reliably in their play and develop mathematical ideas to solve problems. Children will know that numbers can be combined and separated and that two or more amounts can be compared. They will be taught and encouraged to talk about shapes and quantities.
- **Understanding the World.** Children will be supported in developing the knowledge, skills and understanding that will enable them to make sense of their world. At Sherwell Valley they will be offered opportunities to use a range of tools safely, encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations. They will be involved in 'experiments' and work with a range of materials. Children will also experience the way in which Information Technology can support their learning
- **Physical Development.** Physical development will be encouraged and supported. Our children will be provided with opportunities to encourage them to be active which will improve their skills in coordination, control, manipulation and movement. At Sherwell Valley Primary school. The 'LCP' PE scheme will be delivered in order to support this provision. Children will be encouraged to develop an understanding of the importance of physical activity. There will be vast opportunities for children to harness and practise their Fine Motor skills including through dough disco and funky fingers activities.
- **Expressive Arts and Design.** Children will have the opportunity to explore and share their thoughts and feelings through a variety of activities/experiences i.e. art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role play activities. Provision is made which will support their curiosity, exploration and play. At Sherwell Valley we present a wide range of experiences and activities that children can respond to by using all their senses.

We recognise that teaching can take place at **all** times of the day through direct teaching sessions, through times of play inside and outside the classroom. We strive to make our environment irresistible to children and encourage staff to seize every opportunity for teaching. Weekly and daily planning formalizes this and aims to ensure a balance of formal and informal learning in order to optimize this. Staff are encouraged to think about their questions and interactions in children's learning in order to optimize this. Learning should be personalized and by involving the children in reflecting on what they have learned and how they may build upon their skill will be intrinsic to motivating life long learners.

At appropriate opportunities the adults will:

- question, respond to questions and engage the child in extended conversations that support sustained shared thinking.
- extended vocabulary, knowledge and skills
- encourage independence
- add resources that stimulate, motivate and engage the learner
- demonstrate, model and work alongside the children
- help children see links in their learning
- support and encourage the children
- encourage children to be problem solvers, problem setters and investigators
- re-direct the play if necessary
- help children to learn how to negotiate and resolve conflict
- promote children's well being and support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture

- observe and assess learning
- seek to know and understand each individual child and their learning and development.
- recognise what children understand, know and can do, and support them in reaching their potential whilst record observations and being aware of next steps in learning
- provide feedback to child/other adults/parents
- ensure the environment is safe and secure and that the welfare requirements are in place.
- will arrange resources and make time for all children to make free use of a rich indoor and outdoor space

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We uphold the view that learning is underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning. In planning and guiding the children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The 3 characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

All of these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop playing, thinking and learning. Adults also recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance.

It is our aim that children leave the EYFS with:

- a positive 'can do' attitude to learning
- a willingness to take risks and make mistakes
- high levels of engagement tasks where they can practice and build up concepts ideas and skills
- perseverance
- a love of learning
- ideas of their own, that they can plan and follow through
- an ability to express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Learning and Development

At Sherwell Valley Primary School we

- Provide first hand experiences to explore and discover.
- Recognise that, in their play, children use the experiences they have and extend them to build up ideas, concepts and skills.
- Plan and resource a challenging environment where children's play and work can be supported and extended.
- Directly teach, through demonstrating or explaining.
- Encourage and support children to persevere through difficulties, to take risks, to ask questions and problem solve.
- Identify and support next steps in learning.
- Vary experience, using fresh, creative and playful approaches.

Teaching and Learning Style

The majority of the teaching and learning in the Foundation stage is practical and physical. A wide range of learning and teaching styles take place during the week to engage and involve all learners depending on their preferred learning style.

Early Language, Reading and Mathematics.

At Sherwell Valley Primary School, we provide a language-rich environment in which high quality talk is valued. All staff model good communication skills in their interactions with pupils and each other.

For early phonics teaching, the school follows the Read Write Inc. (RWI) phonics scheme to ensure that we are effective in teaching children to be successful early readers. Home reading materials ensure that the children are given reading books that reflect their phonic knowledge, so phonics is the only strategy used for decoding. The children start by taking home sound blending books and then they take home RWI reading books. The school also places an importance on the development of early comprehension skills; in line with the Revised Framework to ensure that children are able, to comprehend what they read and listen to.

This sits alongside the development of children's speaking, listening and language skills which are crucial for developing children's comprehension and vocabulary, with a specific focus on closing the vocabulary gap for children starting school with less experience of a language rich environment. Adults also strive to promote a love of reading through daily story time and carefully chosen books within the learning environment.. Teachers closely monitor children's progress in reading through regular phonics assessments so that interventions are implemented to address gaps in learning promptly. Advice is sought from the provision team where these do not prove successful.

Maths is taught through a range of experiences including counting as part of the daily routine; discreet teaching with follow up group activities and play based opportunities and experiences through the learning environment. We recognise that Maths can take place in any environment and we promote the use of learning maths skills through play-based opportunities. As with phonics, children experiencing any difficulties are identified early and support measures are put into place. Teachers target specific questions at individuals in whole class teaching, extending the children's understanding, allowing key mathematical concepts to be revisited and developed across the year. We adopt the White Rose Maths and the Mastering Number approach to our teaching, which ensures progression and coverage throughout the year.

Play

We believe that it is vital for adults to support children's learning through play, both indoors and outdoors. When playing, the children behave in different ways and by providing flexible resources that can be used in many ways children can explore and facilitate their interests whilst learning core skills. Through this area of learning the children will be developing skills across all the prime and specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals, and the desired outcomes for the end of the EYFS. Continuous provision is carefully planned for and observations of children happen daily, which provide's valuable evidence of a child's understanding and allows the practitioner to plan next steps for a child.

“Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning.”

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021 page 16)

At Sherwell Valley there is a clear balance between adult-led and child initiated activities which allow each child to be creative in their work. Resources are accessible to the children and children are actively encouraged to ask for equipment if they can not see it. Close observations allow class practitioners to observe how children come to reach a conclusion and think critically.

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 (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

The Learning Environment

Our indoor and outdoor learning environment is richly resourced, providing a secure and safe, yet challenging environment. Our indoor environment is comforting and reassuring for the children. They are encouraged to help plan and contribute to the learning environment and keep it tidy. Resources are accessible to all the children, encouraging them to become independent. All children have the opportunity to be outside on a daily basis. Each week children in Nursery and Reception are taken to 'Bowden Woods', this is a wooded area attached to school grounds. In the woods they learn skills and explore the outdoor environment directed by an adult- such as fire building, wood carving, planting and working as a team.

Planning and Observation.

The teacher's in our EYFS unit use the EYFS statutory Framework to support assessment. From this and from analysis of data and on-going assessments, areas of learning are planned through a series of learning experiences, which incorporate pupils' interests. Each learning experience offers opportunities to learn in all seven areas of learning. These plans then inform short-term learning enquiry questions, alongside observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Adult focused and independent activities are planned on a weekly basis. Children have the opportunity to work in each of the learning areas within the classroom and outdoors. Whole class, group and individual activities are used to develop skills in all areas of the curriculum, as appropriate. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, our early years practitioners interact and question to challenge children. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to identify level of achievement, interests and learning styles. Practitioners assessments are based on child and adult initiated tasks from across the year. Our learning journal called "Tapestry" is used frequently to keep parents and/or carers up-to-date with their child's progress and development. Parents are encouraged to support assessments by adding to the online journal during the year.

The reception baseline is carried out within the first 6 weeks of a child starting in reception.

At the end of Reception, teachers complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- meeting expected levels of development
- not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions among teachers working with the children. The results of the profile are shared with parents and carers. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority (LA) in the summer term when these are requested. The LA is under a duty to return this data to the relevant government department. We formally report to parents three times a year, in November, March and July. The report in July is a detailed, written summary and contains information about how each child learns and an assessment against each of the seven areas of learning.

In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgment.

Safety

We believe children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure. Children's safety and welfare is paramount to us. We create a safe, secure and welcoming environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies in place to safeguard children and daily procedures are in place to encourage children to operate in safe ways and to keep them safe. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Inclusion

We value all our children as unique individuals. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of individual children and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. At times, it is necessary to work with children in a small group or on an individual basis outside of the learning environment to allow for specialist input e.g. Speech and Language support. However, whenever possible, support is provided within the classroom context.

It is the school's intention to provide:

- A safe secure learning environment in which all children are valued;
- A wide range of opportunities to motivate support and develop;
- Planned opportunities that build on and extend children's knowledge.

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." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021, p.21)

At Sherwell Valley Primary School necessary steps are taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of each individual child. Children will be made aware of healthy snacks and how to manage their own personal hygiene. Positive behaviour is encouraged through reward stickers and House Points and a structured relationship policy is embedded.

Positive Relationships

At Sherwell Valley Primary School we

- Maintain close, caring and respectful relationships.
- Encourage and support children to relate to others.
- Support children to resolve their own conflicts through problem-solving
- Recognise that parents and practitioners have a lot to learn from each other.
- Help parents to understand more about learning, playing and interacting.

Parents as Partners

Parents are seen as a vital part of the child's learning journey within school, they are the child's first and most enduring educators. They are actively encouraged to contribute to their child's learning by taking an active role in our online learning journal "Tapestry" and by attending regular parents' evenings. Parents are encouraged to attend 'drop-ins'; which take place throughout The Foundation Stage classes. Parents are kept informed of their child's learning through parents' evenings, reports and weekly newsletters/bulletins. Once their child is settled parents are welcome to come into the classroom to work alongside and help out.

Working with other services and organizations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support

possible. We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings, for example to the local post office, and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Continual Professional Development

All EYFS staff keep up to date with EYFS requirements by attending relevant training organised by the local educational authority and working in partnership with other schools. For example half termly Moderation meetings and termly Early Excellence CPD sessions. Meetings are provided for all EYFS staff to enable key messages to be communicated and CPD to be developed.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all the staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The EYFS lead is responsible for the implementation of the EYFS Statutory Framework. The EYFS Lead will liaise with the rest of the staff team to communicate any key issues and provide CPD including how the new EYFS Framework fits and progresses into the National Curriculum.

This policy agreed on: 3rd October 2023
By: EYFS Phase Leader
Will be reviewed on: 3rd October 2024