



Shawfield Primary School

Early Years Policy

Written: May 2021

Reviewed: May 2022

Next Review: May 2024

This policy covers our school's approach to Early Years education and is available to parents and carers through our school website. Should a paper copy of the policy be required, please contact the School Office on 01252 320379.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims

At Shawfield Primary School, we value the importance of the Early Years Foundation stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. We believe that every child deserves the best possible start to school life and work to provide an enabling environment which is safe, welcoming and engaging, where they can grow and thrive. It is a child's right to be safe, healthy and happy therefore the welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play. We aim to support the development of each unique child in developing intellectually, emotionally, physically and socially. We work to build purposeful relationships with parent's and families, to ensure children reach their full potential. We begin this process during our comprehensive Induction process which begins the Summer term before the children start school.

1.2 Statutory Requirements

This policy has been developed in conjunction with the relevant DFE guidance and legislation, including, but not limited to the following:

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021)

The EYFS Framework seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- **a secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- **equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

From September 2021, our curriculum will be supported by the DFE's '**Development Matters' Curriculum Guidance Document (2021)**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality Policy
- SEND Policy

2. Teaching and Learning

2.1 Curriculum

At Shawfield Primary, children are given the opportunity to investigate, explore and learn through structured and free play activities. The curriculum will take into account the children's prior learning and build on it. We plan learning opportunities based on the children's needs and interests to ensure that every child is included and supported.

Activities are planned around the seven areas of learning and development that shape our curriculum:

Communication and Language – children are given opportunities to experience a language rich environment to develop and extend their vocabulary, to develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to become active listeners.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – children are given opportunities to develop a healthy, positive sense of themselves and to form positive relationships with other children and staff; to develop social skills, to understand behaviour and its consequences; to identify their own feelings and how they may manage them.

Physical Development – children are given opportunities to develop a happy, healthy and active lifestyle; to develop co-ordination and movement through gross motor skills activities as well as control and proficiency of their fine motor skills.

Literacy – children are given access to a wide range of quality books to ignite their interests and foster a lifelong love of reading. Both comprehension and word reading are taught to ensure understanding and decoding skills are developed. They are encouraged to link sounds and letters and use them to begin to read and write independently. They are given a wide range of writing opportunities linked to texts that they are familiar with or experiences that they have had.

Mathematics – children are provided with practical 'hands on' experiences to encourage them to have a go at maths and not be afraid of making mistakes. They are encouraged to look for patterns, relationships, and connections in their work. This ensures they build firm foundations in number, pattern and shape which can be built upon in the future.

Understanding the world – children take part in hands-on experiences where they can increase their curiosity and knowledge to develop a sense of the world around them, including their local community. They enrich their understanding and vocabulary, which will later support work in Geography, History and Science.

Expressive arts and design – children are encouraged to explore and use a range of media and materials first hand. They engage with art and design activities, to develop their imagination, creativity and appreciation of art and design in the world around them.

2.2 Learning skills

Children are encouraged to be independent, and we have many areas and activities where children can self-select materials and equipment. Through such child-initiated play the children have the opportunity to develop the 'Characteristics of Effective learning':

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

2.3 A typical day

A typical day in our Early Years classroom will involve a balance of child-initiated and adult-led time. The adults lead daily phonics and maths sessions throughout the year and writing sessions from the Spring term onwards. Time is given to teaching reading and maths in small groups during the week. Other curriculum areas are explored through carpet sessions, adult led activities and through child-led experiences. These are observed by Early Years staff, with opportunities for further questioning or learning challenge to take place.

Half term planning grids, outlining the focus for each curriculum area and topic themes, are available on our school website.

2.4 The Learning Environment

The Early Years setting is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment. The children have access to an indoor classroom space and an outdoor area where daily activities are planned unless circumstances such as the weather make outdoor activities unsafe or inappropriate.

2.5 Inclusion and Equality

As outlined in our Equality Policy, our school is fully committed to equality of education and opportunity for our whole school community. The Early Years curriculum is planned to meet the needs of the unique child and support their development. From an early stage, staff will try to identify children who may have special educational needs. Any pupils with special educational needs will be supported according to the school's SEND Policy.

3. Progression in the Early Years

3.1 Assessments

Children's progress is assessed and recorded regularly. Frequent observations of children are carried out in order to set individual targets for children, inform future planning, and to inform parents of their child's progress.

These observations involve reaching an understanding of a child's current learning by watching, listening and interacting as they engage in activities and demonstrate specific knowledge, skills and understanding. We use 'Tapestry' online learning journals to record observations and capture new learning, proud moments and progress made. We also keep a Learning Journal book for each child, where we store pieces of work that they are proud of and wish to keep and share with their family.

The Statutory, Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is carried out during the first half term of a child's entry along with other teacher-led activities to gain a picture of the child's current learning. Children's progress is tracked during the year and discussed at Pupil Progress meetings with the Senior Leadership team. Children who are not making sufficient progress will be identified at these meetings and given targeted interventions and support where necessary.

Progress will be reported to parents/carers termly at Parents' Evenings and annually on the child's Annual Report. At the end of the academic year all observations, records and adult's own knowledge of each child are gathered and used to judge the children against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) The children then are graded as either working at the expected level of development (for each ELG (Expected) or have not yet met the expectations (Emerging). The Annual report will provide details for parents of their child's attainment against all the ELGs.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body

The Governing Body will approve the Early Years policy and hold the Headteacher to account for its implementation.

4.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the day-to-day implementation of this policy in conjunction with the Early Years Lead.

4.3 Early Years Staff

All staff are responsible for the daily implementation of this policy under the guidance of the Early Years Lead.

4.4 Pupils

Pupils are expected to engage fully in all areas of the curriculum, to work with adults in adult-led activities and to use the environment to explore and develop their own skills and abilities.

5. Monitoring Arrangements

All elements of the Early Years are monitored by the Early Years Lead in conjunction with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team, through planning, book scrutinies, learning walks and pupil conferencing.

This policy will be reviewed every two years and at every review the policy will be approved by the Headteacher and Governing Body.