



Shawfield Primary School

Early Years Policy

May 2024

Written: May 2021

Reviewed: May 2024

Next Review: May 2027

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims

At Shawfield Primary School, we greatly 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 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 (2023)
- Development Matters (2017 – updated 2023)

2. Teaching and Learning

2.1 Curriculum

At Shawfield Primary School, 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 and 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.

Physical Development – children are given opportunities to be active, to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children are helped to understand the importance of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle, including self-care and healthy food choices.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development – children are given opportunities to develop a 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 manage their own feelings and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

Literacy – children are given access to a wide range of quality books to ignite their interests and foster a love of reading. 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 develop their knowledge and understanding of numbers, counting, calculation and shape, space and measures.

Understanding the world – children are guided in developing their sense of the world around them through opportunities to explore and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive arts and design – children are encouraged to explore and use a range of media and materials. They are encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions through art, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

2.2 Planning

Our staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children’s activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

2.3 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' which include:

- Explore what they know
- Have their own ideas
- Being willing to 'have a go'
- Being involved and concentrating
- Persevering
- Enjoy achieving what they set out to do
- Make links in their learning
- Choose their own way to do things

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff 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, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

2.4 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 phonics and maths sessions everyday with time given to teaching reading, writing 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 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 in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support their development. From an early stage, teachers 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

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

Children's progress is assessed and recorded regularly. Frequent observations of children are carried out in order to target children, inform future planning, and to inform parents of their child's progress. These observations involve reaching an understanding of a child's learning by watching, listening and interacting as they engage in everyday 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.

Baseline assessments and tasks are carried out during the first half term of a child's entry into school 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 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) indicating whether children are:

- Meeting the expected levels of development
- Not yet meeting expected levels (emerging)

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

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. Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

6. 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 and book looks, learning walks and pupil conferencing.

This policy will be reviewed in September 2021, when Baseline testing and the new Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage become statutory. It will then be reviewed

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

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

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

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.