





Early Years Policy

‘Every Child, Every Chance Every Day’

Reviewed By	Sally Hillier	Policy Owner	October 2019
Approved by	Cate Gregory	Headteacher	November 2019
Ratified by	Sarah Horsfall	Governor	November 2019
NEXT REVIEW			October 2020

“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, DfE,2014

Aims

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) follows The Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework (DFE, 2012) and is planned and delivered by committed practitioners who fully understand the curriculum requirements. Practice in the EYFS is underpinned by four themes.

A Unique Child + Positive Relationships + Enabling Environments = Learning Development

These themes ensure that our practice supports the children to enjoy, achieve, grow up safe, be healthy, make a positive contribution and understand economic well-being.

Through the EYFS our practitioners aim to deliver individualised learning and care to our young learners giving them the best possible start in life. Our learning environments are well planned providing opportunities for the children to work both inside and outside. We believe we offer the same opportunities within our outside environment as we do inside. These areas encourage and support our children’s independent skills. Throughout the day practitioners provide opportunities for both child initiated, directed child initiated and teacher lead learning. We place a high value on structured and unstructured play. We aspire to develop the potential of all children whatever their gender, race, or belief, building on what they know and can do, and work hard to ensure all children feel confident, secure, safe, valued and special. We ensure that we evaluate our practice and environment in line with our current cohorts and therefore, review our practice in line with and children who may need extra support or have special educational needs and any individual specific needs. We do this through planning, moderation and year group meetings. We believe strongly that every child has the right to have access to the full curriculum. We have a disability equality scheme and accessibility plan.

We believe strongly that parental involvement is key to our children’s successes and parents are encouraged to attend initial parent 1:1 meetings or home visit in the summer term prior to their start in September. We have a

Home school agreement which all parties sign to say they will adhere to for the families' time at Shirley Infant's. We then have two parents' evening through the year and encourage them to support their child with home learning activities. Each half term we have celebration events at the end of a chosen topic. Children share a piece of work with their parents and show their learning profiles, including a parent's page. Parents are encouraged to comment with their child on their favourite parts of the topic and what the parent feels they have achieved. Parents also have the opportunity to contribute to their children's learning evidence **by sharing with staff achievements away from school, this is done through 'wow moments' sent home half termly**. The staff help parents identify key skills to watch out for and constantly give ideas and examples throughout the year to encourage all parents to contribute. We work in partnership with the whole school to ensure a smooth and effective transition between the key stages. We aim to utilize other key publications, such as 'Letters and Sounds' and Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) to support planning, learning and development.

Our Expectations

Our children are expected to attend regularly and arrive on time to ensure the best continuity for the child. We support and encourage our parents to be actively involved in their children's learning and share some activities together such as reading, practising sounds, tricky words and home learning activities. We expect our practitioners to make sure the children feel valued and know they are part of the whole school community. We have a high expectation for the children's behaviour (see behaviour policy) and develop appropriate attitudes to learning and school life, which is enhanced by our Rights and Respecting Schools ethos.

Legal Responsibilities

From September 2008, the EYFS became statutory for all schools and Early Years providers. It was reviewed in 2011 and a revised curriculum was put in place in September 2012. There are a number of standards set out in the EYFS Statutory Guidance booklet, **with the most recent updated booklet being produced in November 2018**, which our school adheres to ensuring that our provision is of a high standard. These standards cover the learning and development and welfare requirements and are reviewed in line with each new publication.

Child protection

Safeguarding children within our care is of high priority. We endeavour to make our children feel safe within their environment and we build strong relationships from the very beginning. Our topic 'Happy to be me' supports the children's Personal, Social and Emotional development to develop their skills to be happy, confident children who can settle into school quickly in an environment in which their individual needs are met. Our children behave in ways that are safe for themselves as well as others (See behaviour policy). We teach the children about possible dangers and how to keep themselves safe and how to keep themselves clean and prevent the spread of illness and disease. This is carried out through our PSHE sessions (see PSHE planning). All staff (who come into contact with the children) have the relevant qualifications and checks. We ensure risk assessments are carried out regularly and records are kept of maintenance and cleanliness of toys. All Early Years staff are asked to sign to confirm their understanding of their obligation under the new requirements regarding 'disqualification by association'.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the principles established by the Children Act 1989 and 2004; and in line with the subsequent advice and guidelines, including the 'Working together to safeguard children' documents (2018) and our responsibilities with regard to the Prevent Strategy (2015).

The aims of this policy are:

- To provide an environment in which children and young people feel safe, secure, valued and respected, and feel confident to approach adults if they are in difficulties.
- To raise the awareness of all teaching and non-teaching staff of the need to safeguard children and of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting possible cases of abuse.
- To provide a systematic means of monitoring children known or thought to be at risk of harm, and ensure we, the school, contribute to assessments of need and support plans for those children.

- To be extra vigilant for children with SEND
- To develop a structured procedure within the school that will be followed by all members of the school community in cases of suspected abuse.
- To ensure that all adults within our school who have access to children have been checked as to their suitability. This includes other community users of our facilities.
- To ensure staff are aware of the Prevent Strategy and able to protect children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of being radicalised.

Please see school's Safeguarding Policy for additional information.

Arrangements for admission

We work together with our feeder Pre-schools and liaise with them closely ready for the next intake. We liaise on the class lists to ensure a balance of boys and girls (where possible), and a balance of Autumn, Spring and Summer born children across the 3 classes. We consider any special needs that a child may have. (See Admission Policy for induction process). We encourage parents to follow our staggered intake to ensure the best settling period for their child. However, every parent is entitled to a full time school place for their child.

Organisation

The school day begins at 8:45am where there are settling activities for the children and parents until the bell goes at 8:55 am. **There are two playtimes one in the morning from 10:45am – 11:00am and an afternoon session from 2:30pm - 2:40pm, children towards the end of Year R will drop the second playtime and it will be replaced with 'Direct physical activity' at a flexible time within the afternoon.** The lunchtime period starts at 11:40 and ends at 1:00 the dinner children go to the hall with the teachers and the sandwich children stay in their classrooms with the Early Years assistants (EYAs). The school day ends at 3:10pm.

The Early Years team review their practice and the curriculum at termly year group meetings and PPA planning sessions for both EYA's and teachers. Reception is made up of 3 classes of 30 children, although, we work together across the reception classes during our MOOT sessions. During this time the children explore all the Early Years areas, working wherever their interests take them.

Our outdoor classroom is securely fenced and provides a safe learning environment where children can develop their independence skills and enhance and extend their learning. We believe that outdoor play is vitally important to a child's development and therefore, they have access to it every day, in safe weather conditions for child initiated, directed child initiated and adult led activities. The outdoor space is set up into areas that replicate the indoor classrooms. There are trolleys with a variety of resources appropriate for that area to encourage independence skills and an opportunity for the children to develop their own and each other's learning.

The Curriculum

Our children follow a broad and balanced curriculum with the EYFS underpinning it all. The learning and development requirements are set out into Prime and Specific areas. There are three Prime areas of learning:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) - here the children learn how to work and play, cooperate and function in a group, develop personal and moral values, understand themselves and others.

Communication and Language (CL) – here the children are encouraged to listen attentively in a range of situation's, giving attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity, allowing them to become competent talkers.

Physical Development (PD) – We aim to develop physical control, mobility, awareness of space, and manipulative skills. Established positive attitudes towards a healthy and active way of life.

There are then four specific areas:

Literacy Development (Lit) – here we develop early literacy skills through reading, writing and phonics activities.

Mathematical Development– here we develop mathematical understanding with a focus on practical mathematics and problem solving. We develop their knowledge of shape, space and measure.

Understanding of the world– this covers finding out about the world around them, other people, and features of the natural and man-made world. A foundation for History, Geography, Design technology and Science. We develop children’s experiences of technology offering them a range of equipment and skills.

Expressive Arts and Design (EA&D) – we aim to foster the children’s creativity through exploring and using media and materials, developing and using their imaginations.

Our Creative Curriculum

Our curriculum is planned through a variety of different topics, each of which offer experiences in all 7 of the areas. Topics are planned with the children’s current interests and abilities in mind, and vary in length depending on where the children take their learning journey. Children are encouraged to pursue their own interests daily, through child initiated play, and are actively encouraged to share aspects of home life through our ‘All About Me bag’ class assemblies. We review our curriculum and environments annually in line with our new cohorts and any individual specific needs that a child has. We believe strongly that every child has the right to have access to the full curriculum.

Assessment

Assessment is vital in ensuring that children are encouraged to follow their own interests and are supported at their individual stage of development. We assess the children on entry to school at approximately week 3 through our Baseline Assessment. **This year this also included the 2019 pilot baseline set out by the government.** We assess the children against their age related expectations through observations made on them on entry to school. We then work out the percentage of children working below, at or above their age related expectations. These percentages tell us where the cohort are in relation to national expectations on entry to school. We assess the children on the three prime areas and then Literacy and Maths.

We then continue assessing the children against the development matters curriculum. Learning journeys from pre-schools are closely looked at and baseline assessments are compared to assessments made via the child’s preschool. Children are then assessed against the appropriate age banding they are working within and then if they are entering, developing or secure. To make these judgements the Early Years Practitioners use a range of formative and summative assessment methods throughout the year. These include:

- Ongoing observational assessments and termly 5 minute observations to inform planning for each child’s continuing development through play-based activities. These are recorded in the children’s individual learning journey.
- Annotated sample of work
- Annotated photographs
- Individual class teacher mark books
- MOOT books – children can contribute to their own assessments
- Scrap books – Parents and child can contribute to their assessments
- Parent and child pages
- WOW moments (parent contributions from home)
- Inside Tracker is used to track children’s progress and inform teachers of their end of year achievement against the early learning goals. This data is sent to the LA at the end of the Reception year for analysis.

All foundation stage assessments are kept in individual files known as ‘learning journeys’. These files are kept and updated by the class teacher and Early Years Assistants. The Early Years leader closely tracks all key groups through the year Gender, EAL, SEND, PP and G&T.

These are then passed up to Year 1 when the children move to the next key stage.

At the end of the year each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals and judged if entering, expected or exceeding. These results are collated and sent off to the LA. The Early Years Leader then collates the data and analysis the % of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD), Exceeding, Expected and Emerging. This is compared to Local and national data once released and a report is compiled to compare year on year trends and this is shared with the SLT and Governors. Action plans are revised and written in line with trends for the following year.

Parent's evenings take place in the Autumn and Spring terms. These give parents the opportunity to formally discuss their child's progress. An end of year written report is sent out in the Summer term. This highlights the children's achievements in the 7 areas of learning.

Staffing

We are committed to staff development through comprehensive professional development. Early Years Teachers have two performance management meetings and the Early Years Assistants and Assistant Assistants' have a performance review. We keep a training record for every staff member of the team.

We have a termly meeting to review and discuss our practice and routines and highlight any areas for improvement which everyone is involved within.

Partnership with parents

We start this process very early on in the induction of our new children. We have introductory meetings with our new parents, where they meet the key people that lead each team, including the school nurse, office staff team lead, Attendance Officer, Head of school and Early Years Leader. We then have afternoon activity sessions for each of the 3 classes. This is where the children can meet other children who will be in their classes and the parents can liaise too. Then throughout the month of July we run our Little Ladybird drop in sessions. The Early Years Support assistants run these sessions with the Friends of Shirley Infant School. The parent and child can visit our school library and take home a book, attend our music sessions or play in our crèche and have a drink and snack. See Admissions Policy

A home/school meeting takes place with the child's class teacher and Early Years assistant in July. The parents can choose one of the two. The home visit gives the staff the opportunity to meet the child in the comfort of their own surroundings and talk to the parents about their child. This is with a particular interest into their likes and dislikes, home life, allergies, toileting issues, medical conditions etc. Additional home visits may be arranged with the Early Years Leader and class teacher if necessary, prior to the child's start date (See home visits policy). The same philosophy is adopted in the school meeting, however, a family may choose this option if a child is particularly nervous about starting school.

Throughout the year parents are supplied with 'WOW moments' to record observations of their child away from school. These are modelled and explained at the Curriculum Workshop in the autumn term. Alongside each set of 'WOW moments' they receive examples or suggestions are included within a letter to help give parents ideas of key areas of the curriculum to look out for, based on our moderation. These suggestions also boost parents confidence in their own ability to contribute to their child's Learning Journey.

Parents are invited into school to attend our celebration events at the end of each topic so their child can share their achievements. At the celebration events the children share a piece of work and their parent page. Here the children write what they have liked or learned in the topic. Parents also inform us of their child's learning. They are invited to pupil progress drop in morning sessions 3 times a year to review targets and work. They are also invited to whole school events such our Christmas Celebration play. We hold Curriculum Workshops for the whole cohort and groups of children, and we will also liaise directly with parents to support each child's learning, including specific home learning targets where appropriate or necessary.

THIS MAY NOT BE THE MOST RECENT VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT IF YOU HAVE NOT ACCESSED IT DIRECTLY FROM OUR SCHOOL WEBSITE.

Parents will also receive a weekly update on the focus of their children's learning for each week of the year through the Marvellous Me Application. Providing parents with information on the key sounds and tricky words learnt and the focus of the maths learning throughout the week.

We have a very active Friends of Shirley Infant school group which supports our parents through informal sessions organized by the class reps and chair to ease the transition in to our school.

Supporting policies

Disability policy

Child Protection Policy

Admissions Policy

Home Visits Policy

Inclusion Policy

Behaviour Policy

Staff member responsible for Implementation and review: Head of school, Early Years Leader and Early Years team.