



Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17: 7 - 8

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Reviewed: September 2024

Next review date: September 2025

Introduction

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we aspire to provide our children with the best possible start by providing them with a welcoming, safe environment where their learning can flourish. We want all of our children to be happy, confident and inquisitive learners.

We aim to provide a high-quality teaching and learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. We provide our children with a language rich environment with lots of play opportunities in order to develop our children's language and social skills, as well as developing their confidence and self-esteem.

We provide a balance between structured play activities and adult led sessions. We use a topic-based approach to inspire our pupils' learning, whilst there are also plenty of opportunities for children to pursue their own interests, ask and answer questions, explore, problem solve and co-operate which helps them to become independent learners.

We also ensure that our children are developing their skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading is at the heart of our curriculum as we believe it is the core skill children need to succeed in their education. We teach writing through texts, children have daily phonics sessions, reading sessions and reading challenges are throughout our provision. We also encourage children to read at home as much as possible.

We are committed to giving our children the best possible start to their school life and we work closely with parents and families to guarantee the best possible outcomes for our pupils. We hold celebration events which families are invited to attend and use an online learning journey which allows parents to receive updates about their child's learning.

As a whole school, our core aims are to provide teaching and learning opportunities through the EYFS curriculum that empowers the children to be:

ASPIRATIONAL
RESPECTFUL
RESILIENT

We believe that by having these three aims at the root, will equip our pupils to **LIVE FRUITFUL LIVES** and to **LEARN, LOVE and GROW**.

Curriculum Intent

At The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools, we provide motivating first-hand experiences whilst encouraging children to build resilience, be aspirational, be respectful and have a lifelong love of learning. We aim to build on the wealth of knowledge and skills children already have when they arrive and are actively developing relationships with feeder settings. We recognise that all children are unique, celebrating and welcoming differences within our school community. Therefore, our curriculum is child centred following the interests and fascinations of the children in the current year group. We are passionate about children leading and engrossing themselves in their learning.

Aims of the EYFS curriculum

The aim of this policy is to outline our approach to achieving the requirements and goals in the delivery of the statutory requirements for EYFS 2021. At The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools, we aim to:

- Give each child a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to expand and foster a deep love of learning;
- Offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test them out along with their own, individual experiences
- Enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop, to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally;
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development;
- Encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere;
- Support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing;
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals;
- Provide children with opportunities to develop their sense of wellbeing and ability to regulate their feelings so that they feel confident in our community and are equipped with all the tools they need to transition to Year 1 effectively;
- Develop the skills and expertise of staff working in EYFS through regular and comprehensive professional development either run by the EYFS Lead or attending courses run by other providers.

Implementation

Effective learning

We acknowledge that children learn in many different ways and we recognise the need to develop strategies that allow all children to learn in ways that best suit them most effectively. We take into account the different ways that children learn when planning and teaching in order to ensure all children access a full and varied curriculum.

We offer opportunities for all children to learn in different ways in the EYFS as outlined in our teaching and learning policy.

Effective Teaching

Our curriculum follows the Early Years Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This document specifies the requirements for learning and development in the EYFS and provides the prime and specific areas of learning we must cover in our curriculum.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive. These areas support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as the prime areas.

The prime areas are;

- Communication and Language – Listening, Attention, Understanding and Speaking.
- Physical Development – Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Self-Regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are;

- Literacy – Comprehension, Working Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the World – Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Reception teacher plans activities within their classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their

ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. (In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately EYFS 2021).

The three characteristics 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.
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Through our knowledge of each child and formative assessments the EYFS team plan exciting and engaging activities that will move the children’s learning forward. This may involve following a class topic where we take advantage of cross curricular links in order to combine transferable skills and develop a wide-ranging vocabulary which underpins the children’s learning. This may also include following individual children’s interests and making the most of those focused moments where the teaching and learning can be maximised in a one to one way with teacher and child. Each year creates its own unique blend of whole class, guided, adult directed play and child-initiated play activities dependant on the nature and needs of the class of individuals.

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and thinking critically and creatively and this takes place both indoors and in our outdoor area. Our outdoor area is open all year round and in all but the most challenging weather conditions. Children make their own decisions about where they learn best and teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all areas of learning both inside and outside.

Phonics

The school follows the Little Wandle (Letter and Sounds - Revised) accredited synthetic phonic programme, using a wide range of resources to support this. Every child has access to a phonics session every day with intervention opportunities for those who find this area of learning more difficult. We provide effective and focused intervention for those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year. This will be provided in an inclusive way and support from parents is also enlisted at an early stage to ensure that the children have every chance to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

You can read our Phonics Policy on our federation website:

<http://fed-mas.n-yorks.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/policy-phonics.pdf>

High Quality Texts

The EYFS classroom have access to a range of high quality fiction and non-fiction books specific to the topics being taught.

The EYFS staff collect evidence of children’s learning through significant observations, photos and videos which are shared with parents using the Tapestry online system. This means that parents can engage with children regularly about their learning and can contribute to the knowledge we have of the child in school. Parents are encouraged to use Tapestry to record the milestones children make at home during the year.

Enrichment Opportunities

We love to provide children with opportunities that lots of them have not experienced before or that enhance their learning in school. We go on visits to support this, for example a trip to a local nature reserve to complement a ‘Come Outside’ topic. We ensure that all of our visits are learning related and will provide the spark for further immersion in a theme or project. Visits are planned to enhance learning and give hands on activity. People with an interest, or expertise, in a particular topic or area are invited into school to work with the children. These might be parents, grandparents, other family members, neighbours or representatives of the local community.

Teachers may plan enrichment days to provide an opportunity for children to study a topic in more detail for the day, giving the opportunity to develop additional skills such as team work, and encouraging them to take part in activities and challenges that are different to their normal everyday lessons.

Resources

Our Reception classroom has defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily and independently. The classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all seven areas of learning. There are a wide range of literacy and mathematics resources, creative areas, role play, books, construction/small world zones, both inside and outdoors. Our children benefit from additional fine and gross motor activities by way of exploration in the outdoor kitchen, gardening in designated 'growing areas' and the school garden, and use of balancing equipment.

Digital Learning

The use of technology to support and enhance pupils' learning is a high priority in school to provide pupils with the necessary skills for the next stage of education, lives in an ever-changing digital society, future careers and ensure that the school offers excellent approach to blended and remote learning (please refer to our teaching and learning policy for more details).

In the EYFS, teachers plan to use a range of online resources making good use of the school laptops, iPads, Beebots and cameras. A range of apps and websites will help the children develop their knowledge and computing skills.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance and adhere to the school safeguarding policy.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom. Members of staff do, however use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support observation assessments. These photos are used in children's online learning journals, in class displays, Big Books and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit scheme. For our Reception children we provide the universal infant free school meal. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal.

Fresh water is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles with water only. Children are taught the importance of keeping clean and washing their hands correctly. The children are also taught the importance of good oral hygiene.

Our 'Early Years Safeguarding and Welfare Policy' can be found on our school website: <http://fed-mas.n-yorks.sch.uk/children/curriculum/>

Equal Opportunities and Special Education Needs and Inclusion

All children are given opportunities to access the National Curriculum requirement. All children regardless of ability, ethnicity, religion or gender, will be given equal opportunity to access all aspects of the EYFS curriculum. Any child experiencing difficulty in accessing part, or all, of the curriculum, will be supported with the time, materials and equipment to access the activity at their own level where this is practically possible. Planning, resources and displays will reflect positive images of all communities represented in our society.

Impact

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children transitioning into Year 1.

Assessment for Learning

We measure progress and children's learning across the year through our assessment which is based on the teacher's knowledge of the child. Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves Reception staff observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. The assessment of children's work is on-going to ensure that understanding is being achieved and that progress is being made.

On entry to Reception we carry out statutory baseline assessments for each child, as well as our own baseline assessments.

During the year, the Reception class teacher updates the termly assessment tracker, which shows each child's development across the areas of learning. This data is then used to discuss progress and plan interventions in Pupil Progress meetings. At the end of Reception, the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG). This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception class end of year reports.

Subject Leaders monitoring

All teachers at The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools are responsible for monitoring standards in Early Years but the Early Years Leader, under the direction of the Head teacher, takes a lead in this. Monitoring activities are planned across the year. For example:

Learning walks and discussions with children.

Lesson observations (Head teacher, Literacy, Maths leads and Governors)

'Book Looks' to monitor progress, attainment and standards.

Professional dialogue between all members of the EYFS staff.

Pupil Progress Meetings.

Internal moderation and external moderation meetings with experienced practitioners.

Regular review of the impact of interventions.