



# Sedgefield Primary School

Learning Together for Life

## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY (Reception and Nursery)**

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in the Early Years at Sedgefield Primary School.

### **INTRODUCTION**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”  
Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.  
Department for Education and Skills 2007

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Sedgefield Primary School the role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is recognised as an important one, where children lay secure foundations on which build their future learning and development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is for children from birth to five years of age. From the age of 3 children can join our nursery and the final year of the EYFS is referred to as the Reception year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

All the children who start in the Early Years at Sedgefield Primary School do so with a range of differing experiences and learning. It is the responsibility of the practitioners within the EYFS to build upon those prior experiences and learning in order to continue, develop and extend them. All practitioners, including teaching assistants, support staff and teachers, work with parents/carers to effectively support the children's learning and development.

## A UNIQUE CHILD

At Sedgefield Primary we aim to meet the needs of all our children through:

- Providing opportunities and experiences for learning that are challenging and yet sensitive to the needs of all children, being inclusive of those with additional needs and recognising that children develop at different rates.
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of the language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress and individual needs and taking action to provide support as necessary and allowing every child to progress.
- Fostering children's independence and self-confidence. Enabling them to make choices and decisions.

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and at Sedgefield Primary we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual.

Practitioners, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas. (For further information see Equal Opportunities Policy.)

## INCLUSION

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by carefully planning to meet these wide-ranging needs (long term, medium term and daily).

Children with special educational needs are given support as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities.

Pupil Support Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The Nursery and Reception teachers discuss these targets with the child, if appropriate, and his/her parent/carer.

The schools SENCo is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy and More Able and Talented Policy.

## POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

At Sedgefield Primary School we recognise that children learn to be independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## HOME/SCHOOL LINKS

We understand that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educator and that by working closely with them there can be a positive impact on the child's development. We aim to work in partnership with all parents/carers, and value their contributions by:

Involving them in our induction procedures.

Outlining how parents/carers can support their child's learning at the meeting in July and other meetings during the year.

Encouraging parents to complete pre-school questionnaires.

Sending home ½ termly letters outlining the topic, as well as weekly letters, giving suggestions for how parents/carers can support their child's learning.

Operating an 'open door' policy whereby parents/carers can arrange to come and discuss concerns and developments and through being able to e-mail direct to the class teacher.

Inviting parents/carers to visit the classroom.

Arranging opportunities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. Sport's Day, Science Week and Class Assembly.

Encouraging parents/carers to read to their child and also listen to their child read and practice their 'Letters and Sounds' books.

Inviting parents/carers to two consultation evenings (October and February) and an open afternoon in the summer term.

Providing a written report in December, March/April and July.

## ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

At Sedgefield Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

## PLANNING

There are three stages in planning:

Long Term

Medium Term

Short Term

Long Term – In order to enable us to deliver a creative, broad and balanced curriculum each ½ term will have 1 or more topics that can be used to form a basis from which to deliver the Early Years Curriculum. It is, most likely that the curriculum will be delivered through children's own interests and important events that are happening. By using the children's own interests, they become more active and engaged learners.

Medium Term – We address aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each ½ term. Using knowledge of the children's stage of development, statements from 'Development Matters in the EYFS' are highlighted, to be covered during the ½ term. If appropriate additional statements may be included to match specific needs or gaps in the document. Resources such as Mary Sheridan's 'From Birth to Five Years' or 'What to expect When' can be used. This planning also includes details of 'things to care about', 'schemes used' and 'phonics'. There are grids that allow for retrospective planning, when children initiate their own learning through areas of interest, taking a planned activity in a different direction or an unplanned stimulus.

Short Term – We identify specific learning objectives, differentiated activities and deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a

weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational teacher assessment; these changes are recorded on the weekly planning. Evaluations are also made on the weekly planning with the implications for future planning recorded. Provision areas are planned for and again modified as directed by the children's interests and needs.

#### OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

Ongoing observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles are used to inform everyday planning. More focused assessments e.g. reading, annotated examples of work etc. also contribute. Through the practitioners' knowledge of the children's development and learning, they are able to plan the next steps to meet their needs. Formative assessment is also carried out during teacher led activities. Observations and assessments are recorded on short or long observation sheets, with the aim for a minimum of 1 of each per half-term, although there may be more. These are collated on a 'working wall'. At the end of each half-term the Nursery children's are put into a journal and the Reception children's are put into the relevant book.

Children are assessed on-entry, and throughout their time in Early Years against the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). These are recorded using the school's own tracking grids. These are recorded at October (or within 6 weeks of joining), December, March and June and summarise all of the assessments and observations that are undertaken and the progress being made. These contribute to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of the Reception Year. The Reception class teachers participate in Local Authority monitoring annually and all practitioners take part in monitoring within school and as part of cluster groups during the year.

In December and March/April parent/carers are provided with a short, written report and a longer, more detailed report in July, including characteristics of effective learning. The EYFS Profile is shared with parent/carers in July.

We give parent/carers opportunity to discuss these if required.

A copy of the Nursery reports are given to the Reception class teacher and Reception reports given to a Year 1 teacher. These are also discussed.

## THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

We operate as a free-flow Early Years Unit and plan accordingly.

Within Early Years there is a maximum of 26 Nursery children, with 1 teacher and 1 teaching assistant, in the morning and 16 in the afternoon, with 2 teaching assistants. There is one Reception Class, with a maximum of thirty children, with one teacher and part-time teacher assistant. Learning Support Assistants are deployed as needed.

The Early Year's Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. It has two areas, the secure outdoor and indoor classrooms, both of which are used to support the children's learning and are supervised. The provision areas both inside and out are resourced in such a way that children are able to find and access equipment and resources independently. Both classrooms are planned and resourced to help the children to develop and be challenged in all 7 areas of learning and development. The outside classroom gives children different opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Early Learning Goals, for both prime and specific areas are stated in "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage", and other Learning and Development guidance, including the characteristics of effective learning, are set out in "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)", both Department for Education 2012.

The seven areas of learning and development are:

### Prime Areas

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

Physical Development (PD)

Communication and Language (CL)

### Specific Areas

Literacy (L)

Mathematics (M)

Understanding the World (UW)

Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

All areas are of equal importance, and depend upon each other in order to develop a rounded approach to child development. The Prime Areas are a strong focus within Nursery. We aim to deliver all of these areas through planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

## LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development”

(“Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are:

Playing and exploring – engagement

Finding out and exploring

Playing with what they know

Being willing to ‘have a go’

Active Learning – motivation

Being involved and concentrating

Keeping trying

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

Having their own ideas

Making Links

Choosing ways to do things

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

We support children’s learning through planned play activities, as well as well resourced provision areas, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children are given some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. This provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

## LIAISON WITH PRE-SCHOOL SETTINGS AND INDUCTION

Children come into the setting from a variety of experiences. We have close links with the feeder nurseries.

Prior to children joining Nursery the Nursery teacher will undertake a home-visit to find out more about the children, their needs and interests, as well as to pass on information to parents/carers and answer questions. Where appropriate she may also visit a setting that a child is at. Children will have an opportunity for a 'stay and play' and then their introduction, through conversation with parents/carers, will be tailored to meet their individual needs.

For children who are joining our Reception class without being in our nursery, the Reception teacher, during the summer term, visits the feeder nurseries, or when not feasible will have a telephone consultation, to meet with children in a familiar environment and to gain information from practitioners who already have a good understanding of the children's achievement and needs. Children are also invited to attend 3 two-hour visits. The children who are in our Nursery are familiar with all of the Early Year's staff, including the Reception teacher and teaching assistant. They will have opportunities to have group sessions led by the Reception teacher, as well as a transition afternoon.

Parents/carers of all Early Years' children are encouraged to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher, Reception and Nursery Teachers, at which routines, procedures, curriculum and expectations are communicated. The September induction procedure is also explained and New Starter Handbook which is distributed to all parents/carers. In addition, parents/carers have opportunities to speak to practitioners.

All Reception children will start full-time from the first day in September, although if there is a need a staggered introduction can be arranged.

## RECEPTION TO YEAR 1 TRANSITION

Reception and Year 1 teachers work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

As well as ongoing encouragement, throughout the Reception year, to develop independence, Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer term, encouraging less dependence on adult support. Reception children are already familiar with Year 1 staff through EYFS/KS1 and whole school activities.

Reception and Year 1 teachers meet in July to pass on the written report and discuss the individual needs of children.

During a whole school transition day, the Reception children visit the Year 1 class and teacher for an afternoon.

#### MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the EYFS team to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Head teacher will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule and report findings to the Governing Body.

The EYFS has a named link governor, Dr Wendy Gill.

This policy will be reviewed as and when needed but at least every two years.

Last Reviewed: February 2019