



Sheffield Lower School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

| Written by | Reviewed and Ratified by Governors | Shared with Staff | Last Updated | Review cycle | Next Review due |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Stephanie Miller – Early Years Phase Leader Lorraine Freeman, Deputy Head Teacher | February 2025 | February 2025 | February 2025 | Annual | February 2026 |

Statement of Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Sheffield Lower School children can join us in our Nursery in the September after they have turned three, and then move into Reception full time at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. The EYFS is based upon four guiding principles. This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four overarching principles.

1. Legal Framework

1.1 This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- The [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) (2024)
- [Development Matters](#) (2023)

1.2 This policy operates in conjunction with the school's values and the following school policies:

- Assessment Feedback and Reporting Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Early Years Foundation Stage Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Healthy Under Five's Policy
- Learning and Teaching Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Information Report
- SEND Policy

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The governing board will be responsible for:

- Approving the EYFS policy
- Holding the headteacher to account for its implementation.

- Making links with the EYFS Phase Leader in order to hold to account the practice and outcomes delivered by the school.

2.2 The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that EYFS is effective across the school
- Ensuring all staff members read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring statutory requirements as stated in the EYFS Statutory Framework are adhered to.

2.3 The Early Years Phase Leader will be responsible for:

- Monitoring and developing all aspects of practice, curriculum, environment, teaching and learning taking place within the EYFS key stage in line with government guidance, statutory frameworks and pupil need
- Supporting teachers and staff to be effective within their roles as EYFS teachers and practitioners.
- Maintaining up to date knowledge of EYFS best practice, pedagogical approaches and hot topics.
- Monitoring wellbeing, engagement, attainment and progress of pupils and quality of teaching within the EYFS Phase
- Working with the whole school to develop a seamless journey for pupils from EYFS to KS2.

2.4 All teaching and support staff will be responsible for:

- Adhering to
- Modelling
- Monitoring the progress of children
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils

Overarching Principles

3. A Unique Child

At Shefford Lower School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We also recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, alongside motivating activities based on children's interests, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

3.1 Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Shefford Lower School are treated fairly regardless of their protected characteristics, such as disability, race, gender, and religion. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children of all genders, children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

3.2 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, skills, experience and interests, alongside developing their self esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- designing environments and 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 their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

3.3 Welfare

It is important to us that all children in Nursery and Reception are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop these important life skills, in line with our school values. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

3.4 At Shefford Lower School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

In our school we:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

4. Positive Relationships

At Shefford Lower School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent by being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

4.1 Parents/Carers as Partners

We ensure that we communicate positively with all parents/carers and that we are always perceived as approachable. We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers about their child before their child starts in our school.
- Offering both parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in the Foundation Stage before starting school.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries.
- Offering two consultation evenings per year.
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Nursery and Reception
- Developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents:
- Providing parents/carers with a weekly outline of the key topics & skills that will be covered in the upcoming week and how they can support this at home.
- Holding workshop and information sessions with parents/carers/

4.2 All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. We also have strong links with various feeder Pre-schools and Childminders and Foundation Stage staff work with providers to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school.

5. Enabling Environments

At Shefford Lower 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 the children's learning.

5.1 Observation, Assessment and Planning

Foundation Stage staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. The staff use the children's interests to plan for themes for which the staff draw up medium term plans. In addition to this the children lead the short term activity planning on a day to day basis. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are from the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. At the end of their Reception year in school each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

5.2 The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Continuous Provision is available for children to use every day. Within each of these areas of provision there is access to a core range of resources that children can use all of the time, throughout the whole year. This provision changes and adapts in lines with the needs of their children, their interest and their development and progress. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor learning area, which is seen as an extension of the indoor space. Children have access to it through most weather types.. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active.

6. Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and we recognise that children learn and develop at different rates. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive; these are known as the Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four Specific Areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

6.1 Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

These describe behaviours children use in order to learn. We believe that in order to learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. In Shefford Lower School, we ensure that the children of our EYFS are able to develop these characteristics through self led and adult guided experiences. The characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring – Engagement
- Active Learning – Motivation
- Creative and Critical Thinking - Thinking

6.2 We deliver learning for all of the areas through, purposeful play and learning experiences, with a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities.

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice 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.

7. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and senior leadership team will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.