



Reviewed in February 2023

Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Springdale First School.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Springdale, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Teaching in the EYFS at Springdale First School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory framework and the four guiding principles that shape practice within the Early Years. These are:

1. Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
3. Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The curriculum is centred on three Prime Areas of Learning:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas of Learning include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning and development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others. All areas of learning and development are closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make links between what they are learning. As effective Early Years practitioners, we aim to plan a broad and balanced range of activities based on the needs of the children in our setting. We plan a yearly progression of skills which provides opportunities for children to retrieve and recall previously taught knowledge and skills. We deliver these skills through a coherent and sequentially designed curriculum based on the children's needs and interests. Whilst we know children learn best when they are following their interests, we also know that it is our responsibility to expose them to ideas and concepts beyond their comfort zone. We therefore plan learning opportunities that broaden and enrich the children's beliefs and experiences.



The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. Educational trips and visits from members of our community are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom. 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' guidance material is used to support our planning and assessments of learner's next steps.

When planning and facilitating these activities we reflect on the different ways that children learn and support children in using the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These are;

Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things and are willing to 'have a go'

Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties; they enjoy achievements

Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

Active Learning through Play

At Springdale First School, we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible, and our Foundation Stage has an ethos of learning through play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

We provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences. These support children to discover, explore, investigate and to develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity. Play can also help them to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts.

Enabling Environments

We aim to provide stimulating and safe learning environments both indoors and outdoors. Children will be encouraged to actively explore the world around them, developing their creativity, independence, thinking skills and ability to solve problems across the curriculum. There is free-flow between the indoor and outdoor areas during child-initiated activities. Both areas are also used for adult directed and adult initiated teaching. Resources used aim to stimulate, challenge and inspire children to engage in learning and provide for both the planned and unplanned curriculum.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of our Foundation Stage. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development to inform their next steps. At the end of the year, our assessments provide a summary of every child's development and learning achievements.

Baseline assessments are carried out during the first half of the Autumn Term. Evidence is gathered through practitioners' observations of children whilst engaged in their self-initiated activities, as well as planned opportunities. Transfer information from pre-schools and parent contributions also support practitioners in making on entry assessments.



Assessment in EYFS is observation based. Staff monitor children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Children's interests are 'in the moment' and need to be responded to there and then to gain the full value of the child's curiosity, understanding and engagement at the time. At Springdale, we work towards this by ensuring there is sufficient time in the day for the adults to work alongside the children in their Let's Explore time, when they are initiating their own learning. As a school, we believe the most important role of the adult is to interact with the children and respond to their emerging needs and interests. As a result, the amount of time spent record keeping and doing administrative tasks has greatly decreased. Staff only capture 'milestone moments,' where children have demonstrated a skill or knowledge that is significant to them and their learning journey. These moments may be captured in the form of a 'bubble up' or on the online learning journey 'Tapestry'.

Learning Journals are used to collect observations along with samples of children's independent work. Children's workbooks also provide evidence for assessment.

We use these observations to support our developing knowledge of individual children. They inform us of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified, and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Interventions

We know that children's interests are in the moment and so we aim to deliver our intervention programmes through play, as we feel this has the most impact on a child's learning and is when they are at their most engaged. Taking them away from their purposeful play to work on skills that they already find challenging is not always the most effective way of supporting the child.

Through our 'focus child' work we can identify children that need to be a focus for more observation, attention and support. We use our formative and summative assessments to identify the children who are attaining below their age-related expectation and those that are classified as disadvantaged. The adults across the base then observe these children carefully and look for opportunities to discuss, extend or elaborate their learning.

The focus children have identified areas of development to work on and the adults aim to incorporate these within their play. These targets are then reviewed to see what progress the children are making and what further support is needed.

Parents as Partners

At Springdale First School, we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- Asking parents to contribute information about their child before starting school (see Induction).
- Running Curriculum Workshops where we explain how we teach Reading, Writing and Mathematics and how parents can support their children at home.
- Providing a medium term plan at the beginning of each topic to outline our teaching and learning in each area of learning.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. Formal parent consultations are held in the Autumn and Spring Terms; parents are informed of their child's



progress and the next steps in their child's learning. Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the school year.

- Sharing learning and home learning via our online learning platform, Tapestry
- Arranging activities throughout the year which encourage parents to celebrate their child's learning e.g. celebration assemblies and fab finishes to topics.
- Written contact through Tapestry, as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring/email school to contact staff

Admissions and Induction

Once a child has successfully gained a place with us at Springdale, prior to their start in September, we offer all our children several opportunities to visit their new setting. We aim to offer two 'Stay and Play' sessions where the children come in mixed groups and begin to meet the EYFS team and their new peers. At this point, the children do not know their class teacher. After the 'Stay and Play' sessions, the children will be allocated their class and will be invited to a 'Getting to Know you Session'. The purpose of which is for the children to meet their new teacher and teaching assistant and start to become familiar with the school environment.

Teachers visit all children in their pre-school settings. We feel preschool is a microcosm of the school environment and is therefore the best indicator of how the children will settle and respond to their new school setting. Preschool practitioners are an invaluable source of information when it comes to our newest learners, so we always plan a substantial amount of time to visit the settings and spend time meeting the children and speaking with their key workers. The aim of these visits is to develop our knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Springdale as smooth as possible. The children also begin to build relationships with Springdale staff before they have even entered the building in the safe and familiar environment of their preschool.

An information evening for new parents is held in June. A presentation is given by the Headteacher and Early Years team about the Foundation Stage. School information packs will be distributed to parents either before or at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. There is also time for parents to look around the Foundation Base and ask any questions.

Before starting school full time in September each parent is offered a meeting with the teacher in school. This is a chance for parents to talk to teaching staff on a one to one basis and to share any confidential information. All parents are then invited to attend our parents' consultations at the end of the first half term to discuss how their child is settling in.

Children from our main feeder pre-schools are also invited to attend Christmas performances.

From Reception to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents, carers, teachers and teaching assistants with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile includes on-going observations, all relevant records held by Foundation Stage, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting the expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile, each child's annual report (which includes a



short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning). This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1. Please see our 'Transition to Year 1' policy for more information.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of our children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of fruit snacks, drinking water being available at all times and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. We also have a topic focus on healthy living and look at ways that we can maintain a healthy lifestyle.

See Health and Safety and Child Protection Policies.

Equal Opportunities

All members of our school community are of equal value regardless of:

- their ethnicity, culture, religion, nationality
- whether or not they are disabled
- their gender or gender identity
- their sexual identity

We recognise and respect difference at Springdale First School. Our curriculum aims to foster an appreciation of each other's cultures and beliefs along with the promotion of a healthy and positive self image.

See Equalities Statement.

Special Educational Needs

All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable practitioners to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the schools Inclusion Leader is consulted for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's policy for Special Educational Needs and Inclusion.

See Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Policies.