



Where Children Come First'

EYFS Policy

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1	Issued	SM	10.1.22
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Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery aims 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 learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

'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.'

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery our early years provision and practice is shaped by four guiding principles, as detailed in the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework which became statutory for all Early Years settings from September 2021:

- **Every child is a unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- 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 on their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/carers.
- 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).

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.

- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, informed by observation and assessment as well as by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are child-initiated, adult supported and adult-led.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment both indoors and outdoors.

**See appendix for further explanation of our practice in relation to these principles.*

The EYFS framework into our curriculum practice

Our Nursery and Reception teachers plan an exciting and challenging curriculum to meet the interests and needs of our respective learners. Our curriculum encompasses the seven areas of learning and development identified in the EYFS framework. All areas of learning and development are equally important and are interconnected; they are used to shape the experiences and activities we facilitate for our children as they work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) at the end of the Reception Year.

Three areas of learning are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas of learning, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

Within these seven areas of learning, there are seventeen ELGs. All areas of learning are of equal importance and interconnected, which is reflected in our planning and provision.

The Importance of Play

Shepton Mallet Community Infants' School & Nursery places a high importance on the value and purpose of play; play is a child's work and fundamental to them building relationships and making sense of their world.

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults”.

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage

Our practitioners facilitate play during child-initiated learning times, engaging in quality interactions with learners to explore their interests and move their learning forward ‘in the moment’. In addition to learning through play, our provision incorporates learning by adults modelling, by observing our peers and through adult-led learning and direct teaching. Children will engage in one-to-one, paired, and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily ‘carpet sessions’, including story time, whole class shared reading, singing, dancing and sharing of home challenges/good work/learning.

Our planning is flexible, and our practitioners are continually evaluating, adapting and evolving their interactions and planning to ensure individual learning and development needs are met. When planning our provision and enhancements, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning landscape to encourage children to free flow between inside and outdoors as they make independent choices in their learning.

Observations and Assessment

We make regular formative assessments of children’s learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation. In our Reception classes we record using two types of observation: long and short. Long observations are recorded on a ‘Long Observation’ sheet and show around 5 minutes of a child’s learning, this

could be child initiated or adult led. Short observations are 'WOW' moments and are recorded on sticky labels. We may use photographs as evidence with both 'short' and 'long' observations as necessary. All observations are stuck into each child's individual Learning Journey book. Parents/carers can view their child's Learning Journey books during parents' evenings or can request to see them at another time that suits. We also use Class Dojo to provide parents/carers with regular updates about their child's experiences and achievements. Every Friday the Reception teachers send home a message detailing what the children have been learning that week in phonics, maths and topic. They will also send home photos of the children learning through play and some adult led learning activities. Our Nursery record observations using 'Tapestry', an online learning journal. Parents/carers have access to Tapestry and receive regular updates about their child's experiences and achievements through the platform. We strongly encourage parents/carers to upload and share their child's experiences and achievements at home with us through the Tapestry (Nursery) or Class Dojo (Reception) platforms, as this helps to inform our understanding of their child and his/her interests, enabling us to see a wider picture of each child's learning and development.

We use the EYFS Framework to record our judgements against the three Prime Areas of learning and four Specific Areas of learning. Assessments across the EYFS are made using the 'best-fit' model and we trust and value the professional knowledge and dialogue of our Early Years Practitioners (EYPs) in making accurate judgements. Each child's level of development is recorded on our own tracking system (Nursery & Reception), which we have created, to inform assessment and monitoring; these are populated for each child at the end of each term (school) or half-termly (Nursery). At the start of the year, we also assess the Reception children upon entry (Baseline) and keep our own termly progress tracking specifically for Literacy and Mathematics.

Judgements are made in respect of whether a child is '*on track*' or '*not on track*' for each area of learning, supported by a set of progressive statements that illustrate if a child is 'on track' to be secure in their learning, as respective to their age. These statements are drawn from the non- statutory guidance "*Development Matters*", which sets out the pathways for children's learning and development in broad ages and stages towards achieving their early learning goals at the end of the Reception year.

Termly Pupil Progress Meetings are held where the learning and development of each individual child in the Reception cohort is discussed with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). These meetings are an integral part of our monitoring, and, through discussion and reflection, interventions and strategies are identified to support each child in reaching their potential.

Annual data for Nursery is discussed with Head Teacher during performance management meetings and is reviewed during the year. Pupils are tracked using our own tracking system which is updated termly.

We inform parents/carers of our Reception cohort of their child's learning and development three times a year; this is via Parents' Meetings in the Autumn and Spring terms and three written reports; Autumn, Spring and Summer. The Summer report details their child's progress against each ELG and describes their profile of learning and development within the context of the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

In our Nursery parents receive a progress report at the end of the academic year. Following these end of year reports, parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's progress with the Nursery Teacher.

Within the first six weeks of the Reception school year, the statutory **Reception Baseline Assessment** is administered to establish children's starting points in their early Literacy, Communication & Language and Mathematics. Each child's data is submitted to the national pupil database to enable progress judgements to be made at the end of their time in primary school. Feedback on children's performance on the RBA is shared at the Autumn term parents' evening, though parents can request the full report if they wish.

At the end of the Reception year, we complete the **EYFS profile** for each child, which is shared with parents and submitted to the local authority. For each early learning goal, children are assessed as either:

Expected - meeting the expected level of development (2)

OR

Emerging – not yet meeting the expected level of development (1)

The EYFS profile is used to decide if a child has achieved a **Good Level of Development (GLD)** by meeting the 'expected' standard across the first five

areas of learning; Personal, Social & Emotional, Physical, Communication & Language, Literacy and Mathematics (comprising twelve ELGs).

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Weaving through our EYFS practice and provision are the three Characteristics of Effective Learning (known as the '*Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning*' in the revised EYFS framework):

- **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

These characteristics underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly. Supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The designated EYFS Lead is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Our Nursery is incorporated in the remit of the EYFS Lead and works in collaboration with the Nursery Teacher.

All adults in our Early Years teams have a key role in children's learning and development and therefore are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

We are committed to enabling high quality continuing professional development (CPD) for all staff. CPD may be cascaded in-house from trained colleagues (on INSET days, twilight sessions or in school training) or sourced externally from the Local Authority or other providers.

The Reception teachers in or school also participate in the local authority moderation process which comprises training and then either a moderation visit or attendance at a moderation cluster meeting. This helps to ensure the validity of our assessment judgements.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within our schools and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated equally regardless of characteristic or abilities. 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 EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, children who are more able and can work at greater depth, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience, 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 to 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 their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in our schools are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits as well as helping children understand why they exist and are important. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

“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 understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- 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.

Parents as Partners

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 their children. We do this through:

- Making home visits before children start our Nursery
- Nursery staff are available to talk with parents when they drop off or collect their child
- Transition to school: the children have the opportunity to spend time with their new teachers before starting school during ‘Play’ sessions and ‘All Change Day’ which parents can attend.
- We invite all parents to an induction meeting the term before their child starts school
- Reception teachers are available at the end of the day to talk with parents when needed.

- School parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms to discuss their child's progress.
- Nursery staff are available to talk with parents when they collect their child and offer a formal parents evening Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss their child's progress. Parents or Nursery can also arrange informal meetings throughout the year as required.
- Three written reports are sent home each year – one per term.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Sports Day, INSPIRE, Parent workshops and 'come and play' sessions – School.

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. In both our Nursery and Reception classes we use the 'Key Worker' system; each child is assigned a member of staff to be their 'key person'. The Key Workers build strong relationships with their key group of children and always there to offer them support, encouragement and emotional support. The children in Reception also complete their Adult-Led learning activities in their Key Groups.

In the summer term our Reception teachers meet with staff from all our feeder Preschools to discuss and hopefully meet the new intake of children.

Children from our Nursery benefit from a very close relationship with the school, children develop familiarity with the school grounds and staff which supports a smooth transition.

A Unique Child

At Shepton Mallet Infants' School & Nursery we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, Class Dojo 'Monster points' as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through developing secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. By using the Keyworker system across all phases of the EYFS we can provide all our children with positive, stable relationships with adults.

Enabling Environments

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 styles, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Our EYFS classrooms are set up with activities which cover all areas of the EYFS Curriculum, and the children can 'free flow' between the indoor and outdoor classrooms as they choose.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and areas where they can be peaceful and calm. Both schools and Nursery facilitate 'free flow' between the indoor and outdoor areas where children can find and access equipment and resources independently. All the EYFS classrooms have their own enclosed outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop across all seven areas of learning.

