



**SHARNFORD CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION
STAGE POLICY**

**This policy was approved by the full governing body on 30th June 2021
and will be reviewed every two years.**

Signed:
Mrs J Gatén,
Chair of Governors

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in reception at Sharnford Church of England Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

Early Years Foundation Stage

"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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up." (Statutory Framework for the Early Years, Department of Education, March 2021)

Aims

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Sharnford Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS is for children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the

EYFS is referred to as the reception year.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in reception to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/guardians, support staff and the reception teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Values

As a Church of England school we have six Christian core values which run through the whole life of the school. As well as exploring the biblical basis of these values, we also explore them as moral values which can be used by anyone of any faith. These values are:

- Perseverance
- Friendship
- Forgiveness
- Justice
- Respect and Reverence
- Thankfulness

EYFS Statutory Framework

From September 2021 we will adhere to the DfE (2021) 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- **A Unique Child** - we recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments** - we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that encourages them to explore their perceptions, investigate their ideas and practise their skills through planned continuous provision and open-ended resources respond to children's needs and interests.

- **Learning and Development** - we recognise that children learn and develop at different rates and aim to support all children to take their individual next steps.

As part of our practice we:

Provide a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as a primary vehicle for learning;

Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Monitor children's progress and provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;

Work in partnership with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure individual needs are met and children make good progress.

Plan enjoyable and challenging learning experiences, informed by observation, assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;

Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported;

Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development. In partnership with parents, Sharnford Primary promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections - prime and specific. The Prime areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. However, all areas are interconnected and important. The 'Prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The 'Specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

From September, 2021, we will use the DFE document 'Development Matters' (2020) and 'Birth to 5 Matters' as the basis for our curriculum to create topic based medium term plans which offer experiences in all seven areas of learning. Short term plans remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and opportunities, children's interests and misconceptions. Children will engage in adult guided whole class, small group and individual activities alongside their child initiated, independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'. In planning and guiding children's activities, our practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and build these into their practice. The characteristics of effective teaching and learning we use are:

1. Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, challenge confidence, communication and physical development.

Play is a crucial aspect of our approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: 'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child initiated activities'. We plan carefully to achieve a balance between children's time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults.

Adults in class will interact with child-initiated play, when appropriate, to stretch and challenge children further. We create a stimulating learning environment and encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

Our children also participate in a daily phonics session, following Ruth Miskin's Read, Write, Inc Scheme and we also follow 'White Rose' for mathematics.

Observations and Assessment

We observe and assess children's development and learning daily, to inform our future plans, recording our observations in a variety of ways. Our staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. Observations of some of the children's achievements are collated in their own personal, online 'Tapestry Learning Journal'. Parents/carers are encouraged to upload their own observations to show us what their children are able to do at home. Progress is reviewed continually throughout the year and parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent evenings.

We quality assure our assessment judgements by meeting termly with colleagues from other EYFS classes within the trust to moderate children's work.

At the end of the year the EYFS profile provides a summary of each child's development and learning, including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification documents, and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement.

The children are assessed as achieving against each area of the EYFS curriculum:

2 = Expected ELG - meeting the expected level

1 = Emerging ELG - not yet meeting the expected level

This is shared with parents/carers as part of the child's end of year written report. This profile is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help the school benchmark and identify improvements. The class teacher also records the summative assessments of all the children termly on 'Arbor'.

The Learning Environment

"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces."

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

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, writing area, topic display table, listening centre, computer area, art and craft area, mud/sand kitchen, play dough, builder's tray, sand, water, large and small construction, small world and puzzles. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Staffing and Organisation

Two part-time teachers are supported by a Teaching Assistant in the EYFS setting. The staff work as a team to plan effective provision, prepare resources and review assessments for the Reception Class.

The Reception Class consists of an indoor and secure outdoor area. Both areas are used to support all areas of the children's learning and include an indoor and outdoor role-play area. The children have access to these areas at all times during the day as part of their continuous provision.

At Sharnford Primary, we engage in ongoing professional development to improve our teaching skills, knowledge and understanding. All practitioners are encouraged to participate in local authority courses, in-service and local cluster group training as well as meeting other colleagues from different schools that are all part of Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust. During these meetings, Practitioners disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues.

Health and Safety

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Sharnford Primary School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety. In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. From September, 2021 we will comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2021) and understand that we must:

Promote the welfare of all children;

Promote good health;

Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;

Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;

Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;

Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, milk time, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices and opportunities to assess and take managed risks to help them develop this important life skill. Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in classrooms, only the class camera and iPads are used to photograph children (for observation and assessment purposes) and children are always appropriately dressed in photographs. Sharnford Primary School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role. The Safeguarding Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Sharnford Primary School. All staff are vigilant and report concerns according to the school's policy and procedures.

Parents and Carers

We recognise the importance of parents/carers as children's first and most enduring educators, with a significant role in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers and

encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care by:

Holding information evenings before the child starts at Sharnford Primary School.

Talking about their child's interests and needs during introductory setting visits.

Being welcoming and approachable, with an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions.

Holding termly parent meetings over the year to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning.

Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys.

Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record.

Encouraging two-way communication through home-school diary and e-mail.

Providing curriculum planning overviews for each topic, each term and providing information on the website (updated weekly) to help parents/carers support learning at home.

Inviting parents into school for collaborative learning sessions to demonstrate how we teach and to help them support their child.

Welcoming parents as volunteers into our school and accompany children on school visits.

Providing parents with an end of year report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile.

Inviting parents to a range of activities and events throughout the year e.g. Assemblies, Christmas performance and Sports Day.

Offering a range of activities to encourage specific collaboration between the child, school and parents / carers e.g. Science and History Days.

Drawing on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

Transitions and Induction

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings.

A parents meeting is held by the Head Teacher and Foundation Stage Teachers in the Summer Term to introduce parents/guardians to the school and Reception procedures. Through this meeting the school's expectations and routines are communicated. The induction process and reception curriculum are also introduced. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to meet the class teacher and to visit the reception classroom. Parents/guardians are given a reception brochure which outlines the reception curriculum and school routines, along with other necessary documentation.

At the start of the Autumn term, the Foundation stage teachers and Teaching Assistant offer a parent interview to all parents, to enable them to meet the new pupils on 'home ground'. This gives parents a confidential and informal visit in which to voice any concerns they may have about their child.

The class teachers and teaching assistants visit Sharnford Pre-school and all children have the opportunity to visit their classroom for three sessions in the summer term. Transfer records from pre-school settings inform reception practitioners about the new intake. If it is required, visits to other local pre-school settings are made in order to aid the induction process further.

Children attend a number of introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Our Reception staff also visit pre-school or nursery settings, to familiarise themselves with the children. Where possible, home visits are also arranged. Parents/carers are encouraged to meet with Reception staff in school for our transition meeting. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have.

At the end of the EYFS, the Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data is sent with them to Year 1 so teachers can plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a 'Move-Up' morning towards the end of the school year in their new classroom to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and learning environment.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

At Sharnford Primary, we value 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).

We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of our children and provide individual support so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies. We have a designated SENCO in school to support any additional needs a child may have. The 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 Able, Gifted and Talented Policy.