



Policy on Early Years Foundation Stage

1 Introduction

This policy outlines the provision Sunnybrow Primary School offers to all its pupils aged two to five years. Children within this age range are taught in The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Foundation Stage has its own framework and is therefore treated as a separate Key Stage. Foundation Stage 1 (FS1) refers to two to four-year olds and is formally known as the Nursery. Foundation Stage 2 (FS2) refers to four to five-year olds and is formally known as Reception. Sunnybrow Primary School caters for Nursery and Reception aged pupils.

At Sunnybrow Primary School, we firmly believe that early childhood education is highly valuable in itself and should not be seen merely as a preparation for the next stage in learning.

2 Aims and objectives

Our school is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We believe that all children should be able to achieve their full potential academically, socially and emotionally. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and encouraged in a happy, caring and fun environment. In order to achieve this, we recognise the importance in promoting positive emotional and mental health and believe that high levels of wellbeing are associated with improved academic outcomes. At Sunnybrow Primary School we believe in nothing but the best!

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year, and in Sunnybrow we cater for pupils in their Nursery and Reception years of the EYFS.

The EYFS is based upon four principles

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

3 Effective Early Years Education

Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. At Sunnybrow Primary School, we recognise that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Therefore, practitioners strive to ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. Early years experiences build on what the children already know and can do. No child should be disadvantaged. Parents and practitioners work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

To be effective, the early years curriculum is carefully structured (recognising different starting points; relevant to levels of need). There are opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and those that they plan or initiate for themselves. Practitioners observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by knowledge of how children develop and learn. Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners engages children in the learning process. For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment is well-planned and well-organised, again based on assessment evidence of the children's own interests generated through both adult and child-initiated activities.

4 The Early Years Framework

The Early Years Framework in its current form became statutory in September 2021. At Sunnybrow Primary School, we adhere to this new framework. All children in the EYFS have access to a broad, rich topic-based curriculum both indoors and outdoors. The seven areas of learning and experience, ages and stages, and the Early Learning Goals now provide a National Framework for individual schools and other pre-five settings in planning, teaching and assessing the early year's framework. They also provide an essential link between the pre-statutory framework and the Key Stage One programmes of study. We have adopted these areas of learning and experience and the national ages and stages, as the basis for our planning as they provide a framework which enables us to achieve our aims for under five provision. We then carefully built upon these statutory requirements and created a bespoke curriculum that meets the unique context of our school and pupils.

The Seven Areas of Learning

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

PRIME AREA: Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

This area has three sub-sections. These are Self-Regulation, Managing self and Building Relationships. For us, we believe that emotional and mental health and wellbeing are central to the learning process. From a young age, our children are taught to recognise, describe and talk openly about their feelings. We advocate the policy of 'it's okay to not be okay' and we teach children simple strategies to begin to deal with self-regulation and resilience from their entry into Reception. Within PSED, the outcomes focus on children learning how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. They cover important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and others.

PRIME AREA: Communication and Language (C and L)

This is broken down into two sub-sections. These cover Listening and Attention & Understanding and Speaking. These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundations for literacy. The Early Years Policy places a strong emphasis on children's developing competence in speaking and listening and understanding. Other areas of learning also make a vital contribution to the successful development of literacy.

PRIME AREA: Physical Development (PD)

This covers both fine and gross motor development and keeping healthy. Physical development is implicit in all areas of the EYFS framework. Teaching concentrates on children's developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Positive attitudes are encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life.

SPECIFIC AREA: Mathematics (M)

This is broken down into two sub sections. These are Number and Numerical Patterns. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and aim to develop a strong

grounding in number so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.

SPECIFIC AREA: Literacy (L)

This area of learning has three sub sections of Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing. The objectives ensure success in early reading and writing skills. Phonics plays a big part in this area and the ability to blend for reading and segment for spelling are skills that are promoted daily in the Foundation Stage at Sunnybrow Primary School through our phonics scheme Little Wandle.

SPECIFIC AREA: Understanding the World (UoW)

This covers the areas of Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and The Natural World. This is a major area of learning and enquiry, focusing on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world. It provides a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning, although technology is no longer a discrete area of the new Framework, but rather opportunities are interwoven throughout the curriculum.

SPECIFIC AREA: Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

This covers art, music, and drama. This area of the EYFS framework focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways.

5 Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

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

6 Planning

At Sunnybrow Primary School, planning is divided into long term, medium term and short term. Long term plans give an overview of our intent; the end-of-year outcomes for a pupil working at the 'expected level' in Nursery and Reception and the 'sticky' knowledge they should know. Medium term plans illustrate the objectives being taught each term. 'Topics' for each term are broadly outlined in a Medium-Term Overview but will change throughout the year, as planning follows the needs and interests of the children. Short term or weekly plans, show specific activities planned to achieve the objectives. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity during the week, although they may not experience them each day.

A mixture of directed and free-choice activities are planned and children's choices are carefully monitored to ensure a balanced programme. The children begin by having free choice of activities for most of the session. This free programme is gradually directed by staff as children get older and more mature, so that as they approach transfer to Key Stage One, they are prepared for the transition into the Key Stage One framework.

7 Admission Arrangements

Children can enter the Foundation Stage 1 class from the term after their second birthday. Children enter the Foundation Stage 2 classes in September of the school year in which they are five. Places in Foundation Stage 1 are offered in accordance with the school's admissions policy and Foundation Stage 2 classes are offered in accordance with Durham Local Authority.

8 Organisation of classes

In Nursery, we offer 15 places. 5 of those places are for 2 year olds. In our Reception class, we offer 19 places. The school day begins at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm. All children must be accompanied to and from school by a known adult. If pupil numbers are low, we may mix EYFS with Year 1 pupils from KS1.

9 Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Sunnybrow Primary School are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion 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 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 boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, 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 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 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.

10 Special Educational Needs

Continual informal and formal assessments undertaken by staff provide opportunities to identify any special educational needs a child may have. As children all develop differently it is recognised that a significant lack in achievement after the initial settling in period represents initial concern and careful monitoring. Children identified with special educational needs are monitored and initial concerns are discussed with parents, SENCO, and advice may be sought from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Service. In the Foundation Stage, we give all children the opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of their range of life experiences, and abilities when planning for their learning.

11 Equal Opportunities

All areas of provision will be made accessible to all children regardless of age, sex, gender, creed, race, ethnicity, or ability.

12 Safeguarding

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted on CPOMS and discussed with the Safeguarding lead professional in school, and if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance. The full Safeguarding Policy is available in school for parents to read if they wish.

13 Parents as Partners

We value the involvement of parents in school. Parental involvement with school begins even before children start Reception with an invitation to visit the school, meet their child's teacher and visit their classroom. Parent consultation meetings are held throughout the year at which parents are invited to discuss their child's progress but we also chat with parents informally throughout the week too. Children's learning is shared via 'spotlight' observations every 3 months and a child's online Class Dojo Portfolio.

A report is sent out at the end of the summer term and parents are invited into school to discuss this report if they wish. It is important to stress that if parents are concerned in any way about their child they should telephone or call into the school to make an appointment to discuss their concerns with the class teacher, EYFS Leader, SENCo or Head teacher.

We encourage parents to contribute information to their child's learning portfolio by uploading their own observations or activities. We also might chat to parents about a child's interest or aspect of learning and upload this to a learning portfolio too.

Parents are kept informed of all happenings in the school by regular newsletters. Parents are invited to various assemblies and functions throughout the year.

14 Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS is based on typical child development and children are assessed to see if they are meeting their developmental milestones at key points throughout the academic year. These plans are flexible so that teachers can respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. This fostering of the children's interests develops a high level of motivation for the children's learning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Regular observations of the child are recorded and reported to parents termly as a 'spotlight' report. At the end of the reception year in school, the child's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile.

15 The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. We aim for a homely feel to our rooms. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The Foundation Stage has an enclosed outdoor area, and children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. We also use our Forest School area throughout the week too. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

16 Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system.

Signed: Claire Sim

Date: 05.01.26