



## Sheffield Lower School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Sheffield Lower School children join us part time in the 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 themes:

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

This policy explains how our practice is underpinned by these four themes.

### A Unique Child

At Sheffield 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.

### Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Sheffield Lower School are treated fairly regardless of race, 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.

### 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.”*



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It is important to us that all children in the 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 this important life skill. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

At Sheffield 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.

### Positive Relationships

At Sheffield 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.

### Parents as Partners

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

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school.
- Offering both parents and children the opportunity to spend time in the Foundation Stage before starting school.
- Operating an open door policy for parents with any queries.
- Using an electronic system for recording children's observations and assessments that allows parents to view this at home and make their own contributions.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation evenings per year.
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in the Foundation Stage and termly review forms, completed with the children, at the end of the autumn and spring terms.
- Developing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents:
- Providing parents 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.

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 have very strong links with various feeder Pre-schools and Childminders and take an active role in the local area Early Years network. The Foundation Stage staff meet with providers to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school.

### Enabling Environments

At Sheffield 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.

### Observation, Assessment and Planning

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning.



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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. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations. At the end of their foundation year in school the children's progress is recorded on to the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

### The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. The Foundation Stage has its own outdoor learning area. 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 and exuberant.

### 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. 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.

#### 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.

#### Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

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.

### 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.