



Early Years

Shirland Primary School

September 2025

Last Reviewed	September 2025
Written By	Joanne Kerry
Reviewed By	Headteacher / Governing Board
Next Review Date	October 2029

EARLY YEARS POLICY

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the academic year in which a child has their fifth birthday.

The EYFS is statutory and is detailed under the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* and the *Practical Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*.

INTENT

We follow the statutory framework and guidance detailed in the EYFS using our extensive experience we observe, plan and teach children in early years.

We provide a broad and balanced Early Years curriculum: -

- based on first hand experiences and purposeful interactions
 - ensuring a secure, safe, caring and stimulating environment full of interesting and challenging activities
 - through carefully planned adult or child-initiated activities
 - encouraging independence and confidence
 - whilst having a regard for the skills and attitudes the Key Stage One curriculum will demand
-
- We aim to make the child's first experience of school happy, positive and fun.
 - We aim to foster a love of learning and develop enquiring minds
 - We aim to instil the Characteristics of Effective Learning such as independence, resilience and confidence
 - We aim to promote emotional well-being
 - We aim to build positive relationships and work in partnership with families (recognising that parents are their child's first and foremost educator), carers and professionals to support every child to develop and learn.

IMPLEMENT

Teaching in the EYFS:

- A carefully planned curriculum which aims for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS.
- Involves creating adult and child-initiated opportunities that will encourage children to explore, create, investigate, rehearse, practise, repeat and discover
- Involves developing Characteristics of Effective Learning
- Uses a multi-sensory, fun play-based approach

- Shows awareness of the different ways and rates by which children develop and learn; that there are many factors affecting achievement including ability, emotional state, age and maturity, and how this informs teaching strategies.
- Has a high expectation of children's behaviour and attainment.
- Recognises the importance of emotional well-being.
- Is outside as much as possible ensuring children take ownership of their learning

Learning in the EYFS

In the EYFS children are learning when they: -

- Collaborate and learn from one another through shared experiences
- Are supported to set their own challenges in their physical environment and in their learning
- Access resources independently
- Use their senses to explore and investigate
- Develop persistence and positive attitudes to learning as detailed in the Characteristics of Effective Learning
- Access the Continuous provision activities through their 'COOL Learning' (Choosing our own learning)

Play in the EYFS

We highly value play and the learning it brings in itself. Anyone who has observed play for any length of time will recognise that, for young children, play is a tool for learning.

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules thereby developing emotional resilience and self-regulation.

Children have the opportunity to think creatively and problem solve alongside others. They express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations as well as re-enact positive experiences building self-awareness and self-esteem.

Inclusion in the EYFS

In consultation and working collaboratively with parents/carers the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) will lead on provision for children who may experience barriers to their learning, which may relate to sensory or physical impairment, learning difficulties or emotional or social development in line with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice (2014) and the school's SEN/Inclusion Policy.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by: -

- Setting realistic and challenging expectations. We aim for all children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS. We achieve this by planning for different learning styles, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities or medical needs, children from all social and cultural backgrounds as well as children with diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued.
- Using resources, which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping which all children have equal access to.
- Monitoring children's progress and providing support where necessary, within the resources available to the school. This may include a phased transition programme dependant on a child's specific SEN needs.
- Providing specific targets detailed in Individual Education Plans (IEP) and following external therapy or support programmes of work such as Speech and Language
- Working collaboratively with families or carers, the SENCo and other professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists and Parent Support Advisor.
- Ensuring a balance across classes, within each cohort, of gender, ability, children with additional learning or medical needs and summer born children.

The EYFS Curriculum

The EYFS is statutory and is important in its own right as a basis for developing essential skills such as listening, speaking, persistence and collaborating with each other. The three prime areas cover the knowledge and skills which are the foundations for future progress, and which are applied and reinforced by the specific areas. All areas of learning are equally important and are interlinked.

The Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals guide our long term planning together with the termly topics.

Weekly Planning focuses on day-to-day organisation of activities. We have a weekly session plan as well as a detailed continuous provision/enhanced learning plan covering the 7 areas of learning. Planning takes into account that children's learning is not necessarily sequential and that they may need time to consolidate, repeat and extend their learning in their own way. All planning is evaluated on an on-going basis and adapted in response to the children's needs and interests.

Assessment in the EYFS

During the children's first half term in Reception, the teacher assesses each child's development and learning attainment against the criteria set out in Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals. It is also a time for the teacher to discover the unique personality and interests of each child.

Statutory baseline assessments take place during the first six weeks of the child starting school.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure future planning reflects individual or group needs. Once a term, summative assessments are entered on to O Track, the assessment tool used by the whole school.

Formative assessment in the Foundation Stage is continuous and takes the form of observations, examples of child-initiated work and samples of dated work from books and photographs. Floorbooks are used to record evidence in PSED, Science, Understanding the World and RE. These are shared with the children throughout the year to recall previous learning and make links with their new learning.

Tapestry is used to record observations and share these with parents. Parents can also send observations and photographs to share their child's progress or outside interests with staff.

At the end of each term staff complete 'I can' statements for each child, highlighting whether the child is 'emerging' or 'expected' as they work towards the ELG.

We have regular termly parents' meetings to ensure parents/carers are informed of their child's progress and next steps in their learning.

Working with Parents/ carers

We recognise the importance of working alongside parents and other significant adults during a child's education. We do this through: -

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend a couple of mornings with their teacher before starting school.
- Organising a staggered start to full time education in September.
- Inviting new parents to a Phonic Workshop in the first term to model how Phonics and reading is taught in school and how they can support their child at home
- Providing formal meetings for parents during the school year to discuss children's progress.
- Welcoming parents to discuss any concerns with the teacher and/or teaching assistants.
- Working to build good relationships with families to promote a regular two-way flow of information. Additional support for families is available through our Learning Mentor or Family Support worker.
- Inviting parents into school once a week for a 'Book and Biscuit' session. This enables parents/carers to spend quality time sharing a story together and talking about the books
- Send out surveys to parents

The Environment and Resources in the EYFS

A rich and varied 'enabling' environment is actively planned for and continuously developed with varied resources to encourage exploratory play-based learning and challenge. The learning environment encompasses both indoor and outdoor provision, which are of equal importance. Children are encouraged to experience all areas of the learning environment in all weathers. We encourage children to plan their own selection of activities balanced with adult initiated activities.

IMPACT

- The majority of children in Reception reach the ELG by the end of Summer
- Children develop the characteristics of effective learning which helps them through the rest of school
- Children develop the ability to manage risks
- Children enjoy being independent in managing themselves and their learning
- Parents are happy with their child's progress
- Parents feel part of the school community
- Practise is improved year on year
- Everyone is included
- Children have high levels of wellbeing and involvement
-

Date of review: September 2025

Reviewed by: Joanne Kerry