

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

<b>Adopted by the Federation Governing Board</b>	<b>March 2022</b>
<b>To be reviewed:</b>	<b>March 2023</b>

**Vision and context**

In Early Years at Follifoot and Spofforth Federation, we recognise the value of supporting the vision for children to Love, Learn and Thrive. We are the first step in a child's educational journey, working alongside families and the local community to provide a welcoming environment for children to learn and develop. Our curriculum offer for all children, begins in Nursery and Reception where:

'Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's life experiences between birth and five have major impact on their future life chances.'

EYFS Statutory Framework, 2021

We are in a unique position to be able to offer our children a dedicated Early Years setting to deliver the EYFS curriculum. As a successful Federation, it has been a pleasure to welcome all Reception pupils from both Spofforth and Follifoot schools as a single Early Years class, based at the Spofforth setting. The benefits to working in this way are:

- all children access the same play based, holistic, child-led curriculum.
- the children have a wider group of peers to enhance their social development.
- there is a dedicated Early Years team with a wealth of experience working with an age group and curriculum they love and are passionate about.
- the children have a welcoming, purpose-built classroom and large dedicated Early Years outside space.

Our Early Years setting provides a warm, unique and secure environment for our youngest children to learn, play and flourish. Through play, the children explore and make sense of the world. They practice new skills, construct and secure their understanding, and have daily opportunities to think creatively. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems, discuss and negotiate plans, and learn to manage their behaviour. We encourage all our children to become independent learners and thinkers and we recognise the importance of a high-quality education for all.

There are four overarching, guiding principles stated in the EYFS Framework which shape early years practice at Follifoot and Spofforth Federation:

- 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 their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **learning and development is very important**. Children develop and learn at different rates

### **Knowledge in EYFS**

In the EYFS, we ensure we have a broad and balanced curriculum. The children learn through a mixture of independent and adult led play and focussed group work, in a stimulating learning environment enriched with open ended resources.

Knowledge in the EYFS refers to the understanding and application of the prime areas (three areas) and specific areas (four areas) of learning.

These seven areas of learning in the EYFS and these are split into the 17 Early Learning Goals that the children will progress towards in their early education and then assessed against at the end of the Reception year

All areas of learning are planned out and taught in a systematic way, to build knowledge through small steps. The prime areas provide the foundations for children's learning and development and these are strengthened through the specific areas of learning.

Prime Areas	Aspect
Communication and language	ELG: Listening, Attention and Understanding
	ELG: Speaking
Physical development	ELG: Gross Motor
	ELG: Fine Motor
Personal, social and emotional development	ELG: Self - Regulation
	ELG: Managing Self
	ELG: Building Relationships
Specific Areas	Aspect
Literacy	ELG: Comprehension
	ELG: Word Reading
	ELG: Writing
Mathematics	ELG: Number
	ELG: Numerical Patterns
Understanding the world	ELG: Past and Present
	ELG: People, Culture and Communities
	ELG: The Natural World
Expressive arts and design	ELG: Creating with Materials
	ELG: Being Imaginative and Expressive

### **Characteristics of effective learning**

Children learn and develop at different rates. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning show the different ways that children may learn. These factors play a central role in children's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They focus on the processes involved in learning, rather than outcomes. Adults observe children's characteristics of learning and use these to plan for children's learning needs and to plan appropriate teaching and learning opportunities

The characteristics of effective learning are:

- **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

### **English in Early Years**

At Federation of Follifoot and Spofforth Schools we believe that all our children can become fluent readers and writers. This is why we teach reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery/Reception and follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

We also deliver a language rich curriculum, based on high quality books and discussion within groups. We encourage talk through play and spend time observing and interacting with children in our environment. We feel language development and communication underpins all of our Early Years Curriculum and is an essential starting point for reading and writing.

As children develop their phonic knowledge, they become confident to move from mark making and emergent writing to writing independent sentences which are phonetically correct. In Early Years we provide a balanced approach to writing, with lots of opportunities for children to write independently in the areas of provision, both indoors and outdoors. This is then scaffolded by staff to encourage name writing, letter formation (which links with our phonics programme) and adult led writing using the sounds that have been taught.

### **Maths in Early Years**

We use the 'Numberblocks' scheme, using the NCTEM materials alongside the short programmes. We feel that Numberblocks is familiar to the children and their parents as they can access it at home, and the visual element of the videos and characters bring the understanding of number to life. We teach maths in a very practical way, using real life elements, such as money in a coffee shop or estimating the number of pine cones fallen from the tree outside.

In the revised EYFS Framework, mathematical knowledge is broken down into two Early Learning Goals:

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

However, we also teach shape, space and measure to ensure that all children have a full knowledge of mathematics and are ready to access the National Curriculum as they move onto Key Stage One.

## **R.E. in Early Years**

RE is a compulsory part of the curriculum for all Reception age pupils and is taught using the North Yorkshire 'Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education' and Religious Education Today's 'Understanding Christianity' scheme. In Early Years we use stories and discussions relevant to the children to begin their religious education. We often find RE sessions with very young children bring up many deep questions and thought-provoking discussions that we would not otherwise have covered.

## **Working with parents and carers**

In our school we work hard to develop good relationships with parents and we often receive positive comments about the family feel in our school. The Early Years classroom is not only the child's first step on the education ladder but also the parent's too. We need parents as partners so we can both support their child's education as a team. We invite parents and carers into the classroom every day so they gain an understanding of what their child will be learning and feel part of it. This also gives both the teacher or parent an opportunity to talk about anything they deem necessary. We encourage parents to share 'wow' moments from home which help us gain a wholistic picture of the child and this also feeds into our assessment; many of our observations are from parents. We feel this daily contact builds strong links between home and school. Using apps such as 'Marvellous Me' allows us to send parents and carers photos and messages providing a snapshot of their child's day. We also provide parents with information events such as 'starting school,' 'how we teach phonics' and also regular stay and play sessions where carers are invited into the classroom to simply play with the children and see what goes on in the classroom. Termly parent consultation evenings provide the opportunity for a more in-depth discussion between parents and teachers.

## **Assessment in Early Years**

At Follifoot and Spofforth Federation, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are taken of children as they play but also during adult led activities. We always ensure we prioritise spending time playing and scaffolding the children's learning rather than observing from afar; we feel this allows us more time to genuinely know the children making summative end of term assessment much more accurate and in-depth. This assessment informs the next steps for individual children but also helps to guide our planning for the next half term. During adult led sessions and child led play the teachers are continually assessing and moving the children on in their learning via questioning, high quality talk and by bringing in new resources and ideas.

In addition to the above:

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA, May 2021).

Throughout the year, staff complete Point in time assessments (PITA) to closely track progress and attainment alongside regular assessments in phonics and early reading.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

### **Safeguarding**

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on appropriate boundaries and school rules to help them understand why they exist. 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. We know that children learn best when they are healthy and safe, when their individual needs are met and when they have the chance to build positive relationships with the adults around them as well as their peers. Our safeguarding policies and curriculum are in line with those of the rest of the school. In addition to this, as an Early Years Unit, we adhere to the safe guarding procedures outlined in the Early Years statutory framework. We have named key workers for the children and share information with their care givers regularly. We carry out a formal daily risk assessment of our classroom and outdoor areas, ensuring the equipment and environment is suitable and safe every morning. We continue to monitor these areas throughout the day.