

George Spicer Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Inspire, Empower, Improve

Date of review:	December 2023 in light of changes for January 2024
Reviewed by:	Senior Leadership Team
Next review planned by:	January 2025 or in light of further changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage guidance.
Policy ratified by :	Headteacher

'Learning well today to live a better tomorrow'

**“No job is more important than working with children in the early years.”
Development Matters. Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early
years foundation stage (2023)**

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018

This policy has due regard to statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

DfE (2023) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. For group and school based providers.

DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'

DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'

DfE (2023) 'The Prevent Duty'

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Allegations of Abuse Against Staff Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy

Our Vision

At George Spicer Primary School, we aim to provide every child with a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning. We encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere. We support children to build relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing. We foster positive relationships with our parents in order to meet each child's individual needs to ensure that they realise their full potential.

Our Principles

We strive at George Spicer Primary School to provide every child with a firm foundation which serves as a springboard to their academic career to enable them to have the best possible future life chances.

Key Requirements

“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 EYFS DfE 2023.

The overarching aim of the EYFS is to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

We seek to provide:

- **Quality and consistency**, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- **A secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership working** between practitioners and parents.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

The guiding principles, which shape our practice, are grouped into four distinct but complimentary themes:

- A Unique Child - every is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- Positive Relationships - children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- Enabling Environments- children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between the school and parents.
- Learning and Development - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Our Curriculum

This document can be read in conjunction with our statement of, 'Intent, Implementation and Impact,' which can also be found on our website.

We are a Gold Rights Respecting School and as such, we actively incorporate the UNCRC articles in our daily school life. Global Goals are also an integral part of George Spicer Primary School and we uphold these in our teaching and learning, where appropriate too.

We acknowledge that we are laying the foundations for our children's educational journey and that we are endeavouring to ensure that they are ready for the next stage in that journey by the time that they leave Reception. We want our children to be independent learners, who are self-motivated and as such we encourage them to adapt their work, think critically and take appropriate risks when learning.

Spoken language is an integral part of children's learning and development. It underpins all that we do as practitioners. The interactions that children have form the basis for their language and cognitive development. We pride ourselves on engaging our children in quality interactions by commenting on what they are doing, repeating back what they have said with new vocabulary added and reading frequently to them.

The Prime Areas of Learning and Development are:

1. Communication and Language – this area focuses on the development of children's spoken language acknowledging that this underpins all of the areas of learning and development. It advocates language rich environments where children are frequently read to, talked to and encouraged to become comfortable hearing and using a rich range of vocabulary
2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development – this area focuses on building relationships, managing feelings and emotions and provides support for children to learn to self-regulate. This is critical for very young children in all aspects of their lives and provides a secure platform from which they can achieve at school and later in life. There is also a focus on staying healthy and managing their own needs
3. Physical Development – This area focuses on the development of the child's physical control, both in their gross motor skills and in fine motor skills. It provides opportunity to develop core strength, co-ordination and balance allowing children to develop proficiency, control and confidence

The Specific Areas of Learning and Development are;

4. Literacy – This focuses on reading, writing, comprehension and encouraging the development of a life-long love of reading. Children are taught pre-reading skills and pre- writing skills in the early stages of the EYFS then they are taught phonics enabling children to decode and recognise the written word
5. Mathematics – This area focuses on learning through practical activities and on developing a strong grounding in number as the foundation essential to excel mathematically. It supports children's understanding and spatial reasoning skills across all areas of maths including shape, space, measure, looking for patterns and

relationships, spotting connections and generally be willing to 'have a go' and not being afraid to make mistakes

6. Understanding of the World – This area focuses on the development of children's knowledge and understanding of their physical environment and their community. It forms the foundations necessary for the later work in year 1 in Science, Design and Technology, History, RE, Geography and ICT.
7. Expressive Arts and Design – This area focuses on the development of the children's imagination and their ability to communicate and express ideas and feelings in creative ways. It incorporates exploring and using media and materials. Creativity is fundamental to successful learning.

These areas are not delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development; the development of the whole child is crucial. All of the areas of learning and development are delivered through planned, purposeful play and learning opportunities, with a balance of adult and child led activities.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Through regular interactions, we will discover children's interests and assess what they know. Also, fundamental to our practice, is to assess how children learn and the variety of different rates that they are learning at. The Characteristics of Effective Learning support our practitioners to do this. They are:

- Playing and Learning – children investigate and experience things and events around them and are willing to 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve.
- Creating and Thinking Critically - children have and develop their own ideas, they make links between different experiences and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning

Teachers plan to ensure that there is a balance of adult led and child initiated learning opportunities across the day. During child initiated activities the adult's role is to show an interest in the children's ideas, build conversation, facilitate and share ideas and model different skills. Timely interactions with the children are essential as this helps to build their understanding and therefore guides new learning. This then informs planning and ensures that the topics covered reflect the children's fascinations and interests at that time. By being flexible, this allows the learning opportunities to be adapted and changed to take into account unexpected occurrences allowing what is currently happening to become an integral part of learning.

Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child initiated learning opportunities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children progress through their year in Reception at George Spicer Primary School, the balance of adult led and child initiated learning opportunities changes in preparation of the more formal learning in Year One.

During the course of the school day, children will be involved in direct teaching by an adult. These take the form of daily English teaching, (teacher input based upon a core book or related activity to enhance learning about the topics contained within the book) a phonics session and a maths related learning opportunity. In the autumn term these sessions are brief and build up in time over the course of the academic year as children mature and prepare for their next stage in education.

Learning through play

"We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything than when we are playing." -Charles Schaefer.

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. Children learn best from activities and experiences that they have initiated and playing with peers is important for their development. We carefully plan to provide an enabling environment and offer purposeful play and learning opportunities to reflect the children's interests and to inspire them further, whilst also making sure that they have the opportunity to embed, extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching. Constant opportunities are provided for children to be able to make their own decisions and choices in order that they can become independent, confident and happy learners.

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand rules. Children see the high expectations we have in every aspect of our day and they delight in trying to meet these. 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. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Giving children the opportunity to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings of the way to do things. With adult support this enhances the children's ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to choose to work inside or outside during their independent learning time.

Inclusion

All children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender.

The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace.

Our SEN policy ensures that the needs of all the children are met, regardless of any protected characteristics they have and receive the support they need to provide the best learning experience possible.

SEND in the EYFS at George Spicer will be monitored and managed by the site SENCO and the Leader of Learning for Reception.

The learning environment; indoor and outdoor

The classroom is organised in such a way that children can explore and learn in a safe environment.

Children have access to an enclosed outdoor area which they access on a daily basis in all weathers provided they have appropriate clothing. We encourage all families to leave a pair of wellington boots in school for their child.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress

At George Spicer Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain in-depth knowledge of each child's level of understanding. Information may be collected in the form of photographic evidence coupled with a contextualised observation, examples of work, parental conversations, information from other professionals and play partnering but the most important aspect of our practice is the practitioner's knowledge of the children. This is not an evidence gathering exercise rather an opportunity to provide some examples that might be kept in the child's books, folder or on the digital platform, EYLog, to document the children's educational journey. All of this information, alongside spending quality time interacting with children, practitioners will make decisions regarding their level of achievement, interests and learning styles.

Within the first six weeks that a child starts Reception, practitioners will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a mandatory assessment, which will be undertaken once the children have settled in.

We also undertake our own baseline assessment for each child when they start at George Spicer Primary. Children are then monitored during regular meetings ensuring that they are making the progress they should to meet the Early Learning Goals.

Progress is shared with parents/carers at Parent Meetings and in their end of year report.

At the end of the EYFS, practitioners 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.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers

We recognise the vital importance of establishing effective relationships with parents/carers to ensure that children realise their potential. We recognise that parents and carers are their child's/children's first and most enduring educators, and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, as well as their future role, in educating their child/children.

Parents/carers are always welcome. We provide a variety of opportunities for working together. Play and Stay sessions, staggered entry to school, Story Café, Phonics Workshop, Parent Evening Meetings and practitioners just being available at the end of every day once the children have left.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

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 around them.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general through our curriculum, for example by talking to the children in an age appropriate way about;

- The effects of eating too many sweet things and how moderation is best
- The importance of brushing their teeth
- The importance of mental health and well-being

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our School Child Protection Policy.

Transition periods

The transition from Reception to Year One is carefully planned, adapted and managed based on the needs and requirements of the children in each cohort. More information can be obtained by speaking to the Leader of Learning for Reception.

Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the governing body and the Headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

All members of staff directly involved with the EYFS are required to familiarise themselves with all processes and procedures outlined in this policy as part of their induction.