

Early Years Policy

Date: March 2026

Review Date: March 2027

Introduction

As part of Springhead School, pupils in our Early Years follow the same main aims of the school. In the Early Years we aim to provide a happy, safe, caring, stimulating and well organised environment in which children learn by building upon what they already know and can do. We ensure all children develop to their full potential academically, socially and physically, so that they acquire knowledge and understanding relevant to life.

Aims

We aim to help the children to develop lively enquiring minds and give them opportunities to make choices, take decisions and become independent and socially confident with a positive self-image.

Great emphasis is placed on learning through firsthand experience and relationships within school and we help our children develop moral values, respect and tolerance of and for others. We are committed to the development of a broad balanced and differentiated curriculum.

We believe a child's education is and must always be viewed as a partnership between parents and school. We value the importance of positive relationships with parents and carers as an essential feature of high quality early year's practice. All children are treated as individuals and are valued, supported and encouraged to achieve the main aims of the school.

Objectives

- To provide a well-planned and resourced curriculum, following the early learning goals of the Foundation Stage Curriculum
- To promote independence and self-management through a stimulating and attractive environment.
- To provide planned and purposeful differentiated activities that provide opportunities for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors.
- To structure quality and stimulating play situations. Making appropriate interventions in order to develop and extend learning.
- To continually monitor and assess children, through next steps in both Nursery and Reception.
- To work together as a team to ensure continuity and progression between teaching and planning in Nursery and Reception and to ensure a smooth transition from Nursery into Reception and Year One.

Organisation of Nursery

The Nursery offers part time sessions. Please see our Admissions Policy on requesting a place.

Organisation of Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter their Early Years Foundation Stage class in the year in which they will be five. The timings for a full day are 9am-3pm.

Planning

Long Term: The long-term planning in the Early Years works on a four year cycle and is in line with the whole school. It enables us to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage Curriculum. Teachers will choose their own class topic within the overarching whole school topic area that meets the needs of the pupils in their class and with children's interests.

Medium Term: The Early Years team meet before each new topic to plan for the term ahead. The medium-term planning sheets are filled in for each half term with the activities and indication of the area of learning and the steps that will be covered. A topic web is sent home to parents at the start of each term including suggested activities for homework.

Short Term Planning: These plans show the teaching objectives for each activity/lesson. They also indicate the differentiation, organisation of both adult and physical resources and assessments that will be made.

Teaching Strategies

In the Early Years Foundation Stage we value the importance of play both indoors and outdoors and its vital role in developing children's learning. We therefore ensure it is an integral part of all our teaching and learning. The majority of our teaching is interactive and based upon first hand experiences using resources, which inspire and motivate children to learn. We always try to provide a range of teaching strategies to cater for all needs.

Adult planned Children are encouraged to access direct teaching from an adult throughout the week. During these activities the adult will demonstrate and teach the children new skills and techniques.

Child Initiated Activities Resources are set up around the setting to allow children time to independently explore, consolidate and build upon skills they already have either individually or in a group. Appropriate interventions are made to develop their play to extend their learning.

Whole class: The amount of time teaching children as a whole class reflects the needs of the pupils at any given time.

Differentiation: In order to maximise each individual child's potential, we use a variety of teaching strategies and approaches to enable all children to partake in activities fully and effectively.

Monitoring/Evaluation

Roles and Responsibilities

The Early Year's lead has overall responsibility for planning and assessment and is responsible for leading the teachers and teaching assistants.

Continuity and Progression (Transitions in the Foundation Stage)

Initial visits

It is our school policy to visit the children at home/current setting (where possible) before they enter Nursery or the Early Years Foundation stage. We offer visits to every family along with the opportunity to visit the setting before they start. Time is taken to find out about the child's likes, dislikes and interests. A Planning meeting, admission forms and medical forms are completed with parents. The school nurse and other professionals are also invited to join the planning meeting.

Assessment/ Record Keeping

Assessment in the Early Years is continuous and involves assessment of what has been planned and regular observations of the children engaging in activities. We use these observations of the children's learning to inform our future planning.

Learning Journey – All Early Years children have individual Learning Journey books on our Evidence for Learning app, with observations, photographs and pieces of work for each of the areas of learning. Pupils learning is also assessed 3 times a year using the Differentiated Learning Outcomes. Children are also given a baseline assessment 6 weeks after starting in Nursery or Foundation stage. We also use individual next steps to set targets linked to outcomes on children's Education Health and Care Plans or from their own observations.

Foundation Stage Profiles – In the Foundation stage we collate observations, photographs and examples of the children's work for each of the areas of learning. At the end of the year we complete a Foundation Stage Profile for each individual child, this data is sent electronically to North Yorkshire County Council.

Special Educational Needs and Equal Opportunities

We take into account the range of life experiences our children have when planning, to ensure every child has the opportunity to achieve their potential regardless of race, gender and ability. We ensure when choosing our resources, they reflect the diversity of the wider world and are free from discrimination and stereotyping. Please see the school's policy on Equal Opportunities.

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP) 0-5 year olds

The Code of Practice states that 'Local authorities should consider reviewing an EHC plan for a child under five at least every three to six months to ensure that the provision continues to be appropriate. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parent must be fully consulted on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal.'

We review the EHCPs as part of a 'Moved In' meeting to also discuss how the children are settling in and to look at Base Line assessments

Home school Links

We recognise the crucial role parents play in the education of their child and we therefore strive to develop an effective partnership with parents and make them feel welcome and valued. We are keen to speak to parents about their child before they start school.

- Children are visited in their current setting/home (where possible) before they begin school.
- All parents are invited to visit the setting before the children are due to start. We hold a Planning Meeting before the children start
- An Early Years annual report is sent to parents at the end of the school year, the report gives comments on a child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights their strengths and identifies a child's next steps.
- Parent evenings are held throughout the year.
- Home School diaries are used to share information and successes for the children
- All pupils in EYFS are allocated a Key Person before they start to support their transition. A welcome booklet is issued to families containing relevant information about the classroom

Resources

Statutory framework for the Early Years foundation stage 2024

Characteristics of Effective Learning (non-statutory)

Development matters (non-statutory)

Safeguarding

Safeguarding processes in the EYFS adhere to the EYFS Framework, ensuring supervision during meals and implementing a tooth brushing program.

Records are kept of any child that falls asleep following the EYFS Framework guidance.

Our Early Years safeguarding is in line with the whole school policy and includes any concerns around the use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

Links

Safeguarding including Child Protection and PREVENT
Admission Arrangements
Behavior and Discipline including Anti Bullying Policy

GDPR and Data Protection
Equality Policy
Health and Safety
Pupil Premium Statement
SEN Report