



Simonside Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their 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.”

Taken from Early Years Foundation Stage Profile
Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A unique child. We recognise that every child is a competent learner, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We 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 as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships. We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments. We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development. The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Learning spaces within the classroom reflect each area of the early years curriculum.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Simonside Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their charge.

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Simonside Primary School, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability. Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide opportunities for all children whatever their need.

Learning and Development

Learning and development is categorised into **three prime** areas of learning:

- **Communication and language.**
- **Physical development.**
- **Personal, social and emotional development.**

Additionally there are four specific areas of learning:

- **Literacy.**
- **Mathematics.**
- **Understanding the world.**
- **Expressive arts and design.**

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is by:

- Playing and exploring.
- Active learning.
- Creating and thinking critically.

Observation, Differentiation, Assessment and Planning

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations matched to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the foundation stage. We help them do this by carefully planning daily activities to meet the needs of all learners i.e. boys and girls, children with special educational needs, those that are more able, those that have any disabilities. When planning activities staff are also very aware of the differing social and cultural backgrounds and ethnic groups our children are from.

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. All staff who work in the Foundation Stage are involved in this process and a range of differentiated tasks are planned accordingly.

Assessment

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Termly, we record each child's level of development to be emerging, developing or secure within the Development Matters age-bands. Next Steps in Learning /Targets are then set for each child and shared with parents. At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at target setting meetings and in the end-of-year report. The children's work is recorded in their Literacy and Maths books (in Reception) and their learning journals. Parents receive a short termly report and a longer more formal end of year report. These both offer brief comments on their child's progress in each area of learning. They highlight the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress.

Learning through Play

Through play our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and 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. At Simonside Primary School, children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer as well as more structured activities, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Intimate Care

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. An intimate care log is kept within both Nursery and Reception areas.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs are supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. SEN support review forms identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The school's SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through our genuine "open-door" policy
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- providing various activities that involve parents, through regular communication with home (including newsletters and home-school books) and inviting parents to curriculum meetings or stay-and-play sessions, in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking.

- We also keep parents up to date on what the children are learning through regular posts on our blog accessed via the school website;
- Termly progress reports and next steps in learning shared with parents.
- Parents are invited to fill in a 'Parent/carers views' form each term where they have the opportunity to report the progress they can see their child making at home as well as share anything else that they feel is important for staff to know.
- Sharing achievement trees in the cloakroom give parents the opportunity to share milestones children have achieved at home with staff. E.g using the toilet indep or learning to ride their bike for the first time.

Staff in EYFS at Simonside spend a great deal of time building relationships with parents, offering support and advice, talking through concerns they have and referring them to our parent support advisor when needed. We are all very much a part of the parents and children's lives each and every day.

Transition. Moving on

At Simonside, we fully support our children in every move that they make through school. Staff in EYFS prepare children for moving from Nursery to Reception and from Reception to Year 1 by putting a number of measures and procedures in place thus allowing a smooth transition for all children.

During the summer term these procedures include :-

- Staff meet with the next teacher to share assessments made, progress, next steps in learning etc. Books, files, guided reading records are also passed up to the next teacher so they can see learning that has taken place / the work completed in the previous year group.
- Medical/dietary information is also shared as well as any particular family circumstances that staff need to be aware of.
- Staff hold 'Welcome' meetings for parents in the summer term so that vital information about start dates, routines, uniform, equipment children will need, can be shared. Parents are given a handbook which contains all of the relevant information they will need as well as a guide to the curriculum expectations for the year group their child will be entering. Parents have ample opportunity at these meetings to voice any questions or concerns they may have about their child moving classes.
- Planned visits are arranged for children to spend time in their new classes and get to know the staff and other children if they don't know them already.
- Where appropriate, teaching assistants will move to the new year group for the first few weeks in September to support any individual children who may struggle with the changes.

Reviewed March 2018.

SL Berryman