



Slingsby Community Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage

Rationale

No job is more important than working with children in the early years (*Development Matters, Revised Edition, July 2021*). The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet 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. Within this, there are four guiding principles that the EYFS requires practitioners to reference and inform their practice. These are as follows:

- that every child is unique.
- the importance of positive relationships in helping children to become strong and independent.
- enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs to facilitate, build and develop their learning over time.
- recognition that children learn and develop at different rates.

At Slingsby School, we are very mindful of this and consequently work hard to ensure the very best start for each and every child in our care. We are also guided by the Slingsby values: respect, honesty, resilience, expectations and caring for others. Our curriculum follows the requirements of the EYFS and is informed by the "Development Matters" guidance; consequently, it is designed with the guiding principles detailed in our curriculum intent.

Intent

It is our intent that our EYFS will:

- Have a happy, positive and fun start to their school life in which children can establish solid foundations on which to expend and foster a deep love of learning.
- Be ambitious in content which is carefully sequenced to build on and extend children's existing knowledge or prior learning.
- Prepare children to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of their foundation stage year by ensuring that all children have made good or better progress from their individual starting points.
- Encourage and foster high expectations in the development of their social, imaginative, physical, verbal, intellectual and emotional skills.
- Allow flexibility in approach. Children learn when they are actively involved in the process, so we have regard to what the children in our setting are interested in and respond accordingly.
- Include carefully planned development of language through shared reading and storytelling. Adults also model new language by talking with the children, not to them. We encourage the children to then use this "new" language in the classroom, thereby extending their vocabulary.
- Our EYFS curriculum will respond to the fact that children learn in different ways. We aim to create a learning environment which provides rich and varied opportunities for children to follow their own interests, explore new ones, learn alongside others and with support or direction from an adult; and which encourages children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere.

- Help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success; and developing resilience and confidence to achieve goals.
- Focus on small steps of in depth learning within our broad and ambitious curriculum to ensure children make real progress in preparation for their learning in KS1.

Implementation

The areas of learning and development.

Within the EYFS there are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. These are the prime areas:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening and Attention; Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Moving & Handling; Health & Self Care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Making Relationships; Managing Feelings & Behaviour; Self-Confidence & Self Awareness

Providers must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** – Reading & Writing
- **Mathematical Development** – Number & Shape, Space and Measures
- **Understanding the World** – People & Communities, The World & Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Exploring & Using Media and Materials; and Being Imaginative

Throughout all areas of learning and at the heart of the EYFS are the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning.'

We strive to develop these key characteristics as they highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics 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. All of the crucial skills, knowledge and vocabulary that we teach are presented to the children progressively throughout the year. These encompass a range of topics and support children to develop their experience and knowledge across a range of themes.

Teaching

At Slingsby, the children in EYFS encounter activities and experiences indoors and outdoors, based around these areas of learning and development in a number of different ways.

- High quality, planned continuous provision.
- Modelling by adults, integrated in different activities throughout the day.
- Planned direct teaching.
- Opportunities for independent play.

- Adults engaging in play alongside the children, providing “scaffolding” where appropriate to extend the children’s learning.

Continuous provision

Within the classroom environment, there are various opportunities for the children to extend their learning, experience new challenges or create their own both indoors and outdoors. The children are able to “free-flow” between the two as they wish. As the year progresses, the children are encouraged to complete “challenges” within these areas, based on and in response to their own interests, identified next steps or to consolidate or deepen what we want them to know.

Adult modelling

Within the daily routines in the classroom, opportunities are taken to integrate learning and embed knowledge. This may be through storytimes, but can also include such things as counting rhymes and songs. To create a communication and vocabulary rich environment, such opportunities are also taken to model speaking in sentences, using conjunctions and tenses correctly as well as repeating new words.

Planned direct teaching

Children receive daily Phonics and Maths sessions from entry. These vary in content and length as the year progresses. They also experience weekly small group mark making opportunities which again evolve and develop as the year progresses, influenced by the interests and needs of the children.

Independent play

In order to engender a culture of curiosity, intrigue and enthusiasm for learning the children have opportunities for independent play during our “free-flow” learning time. This allows the children to follow and develop their own interests. When children are interested and actively involved in an activity, they are learning. Adults within the setting will join in with and play alongside the children, extending their play through questioning, prompting and modelling to encourage the child’s thoughts about their learning as well as encouraging them to problem solve.

Assessment, Observations and Learning Journals

Assessments

When children enter our setting in their Reception year, they complete the DFE statutory baseline assessments within the first six weeks. The children are baselined against the Early Years outcomes, which provides staff with clear starting points. At the end of each term, the class teacher (Early Years Lead) makes a summative assessment of each individual child’s achievement and progress, using mainly evidence from observations and work from books will also contribute towards this.

Observations

Observations are key to assessing what children can achieve independently. It is vital that we carry out observations because it ensures that we are placing the child at the centre of our practice. Our observations are a mixture of formal (planned) but mostly informal (spontaneous). Our observations are a process of watching the children, listening to them and taking note of what we see and hear. This helps us to identify the specific needs of each child. We discover what new skills and abilities are developing over time and allows us to assess progress so we can plan for next steps in children’s development and learning.

Outstanding observational skills involve:

Looking – what are they doing, how and where they spend their time. Do they play alone or as group? Through looking we develop a good understanding of child development.

Listening – paying attention to the interaction of the individual child with different adults and between different children. Recording – initially this is just noting important features of children’s responses, behaviour and learning. These notes are then written up afterwards so that interactions with the children remain paramount.

Being Objective – once notes are looked up all adults then objectively reflect on what has been observed. This involves thinking through what's been seen and maybe talking it through with other staff to clarify thoughts. Adults then questions what was seen and heard to clarify, confirm and sometimes reject ideas of what they've observed. Children are often involved in this process and may engage in dialogue as the child and adult reflect on the learning together.

Not all observations will be written down. Only those that record significant experiences and milestones in children's development.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting and staff actively communicate with parents/carers 'on the door' at the beginning and end of the school day. Parents have access to their children's learning journeys throughout each term. Throughout the year, parents can attend a parents evening where learning is reviewed and receive a comprehensive end of year report which details their child's successes and targeted areas.

Impact

Our aim is to ensure that at the end of their Reception year each child has developed a sound enthusiasm and curiosity for learning, solid relationships with their peers and adults and are thriving socially and emotionally. They will display high levels of engagement through their positive attitudes to learning. They are developing resilience to set backs and are proud of their achievements. They work collaboratively, using the early skills they have developed in managing their own feelings and behaviour; and are more aware of how their actions can impact others. We envision that by the end of EYFS, children have the person, physical and social skills that they need to succeed as they move into Year 1.

We make every effort to ensure children achieve a good level of development within their Reception year, thus achieving the expected level in the three prime areas as well as Literacy and Maths. However, we also recognise and value each child as an individual and adapt and tailor our teaching and learning opportunities to ensure all children make excellent personal progress across all areas of learning. Where necessary, this will include further opportunities for adult led learning to close any gaps.