NEW SILKSWORTH ACADEMY

ALLIANCE • AMBITION • ACHIEVEMENT

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

Rationale

This policy outlines the teaching, organisation and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at New Silksworth Academy (NSA). The school's policy for EYFS is based on 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (March 2021)'. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years old, when they reach the end of their reception year. At NSA we greatly value the important role that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that EYFS is important in its own right and plays an integral role in preparing children for life and not simply the next stage in their education.

Aims and Objectives

Through our Early Years curriculum, we aim to:

- provide a structured, secure, caring and well-resourced learning environment both inside and out which meets all the individual developmental needs of 'young learners' and underpins all future learning.
- enable children to become confident, motivated and happy learners, developing the skills and attitudes necessary for their own successful future learning.
- enable early development to take place within the caring and nurturing environment of NSA, in line with the ethos and values, which the school upholds and promotes.
- develop independence and individuality, whilst fostering respect and tolerance for others irrespective of ability, race, creed, gender or background.

In order to achieve the above objectives NSA's school staff and governors will establish the foundations that underpin all future learning by providing a curriculum for the EYFS based on the following principles;

- the development of positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning and the development of positive behaviour and social interaction skills
- the promotion and development of personal, social and emotional wellbeing
- encouragement of the development of self-confidence and positive self-awareness
- enabling children to develop skills of attention, concentration and persistence
- placing speech, language and communication at the heart of learning
- laying the foundations for developing reading and writing
- development of early mathematical skills and concepts
- development of an understanding of the world in which children live
- enabling children to be creative in their responses to their world and in their development of skills
- encouraging children to develop their imagination through the exploration of media and materials
- promoting healthy and safe physical development
- encouraging independence and ownership

All children require:

- Adults who are sensitive to their differing needs, abilities, backgrounds and previous experiences to teach, support, care and offer equal opportunities for them all to develop.
- Adults who will respect them and value their ideas and opinions recognising that every child is an individual.
- A challenging and diverse curriculum offering ample opportunity to practice and develop skills and learning. This includes rich and positive learning experiences with plenty of first-hand experiences and including regular opportunities to explore and learn through practical and play activities.
- Opportunities to make decisions and to take responsibility - both for their learning and behaviour. The curriculum is founded upon offering opportunities for the development of personal qualities, social skills, and positive attitudes towards learning. This includes the chance to make mistakes in a forgiving environment and to realise that making mistakes is a learning experience.

In summary, a well-planned, carefully structured programme of academic and personal development, building on past experiences and achievements - delivered in ways appropriate to their age and stage.

Structure of Provision & Ratios

Our Early Years provision is structured into three progressive settings:

Provision Phase	Age Group	Minimum Statutory Staffing Ratio	Key Focus & Learning Behaviours
Early Learners	2 – 3 Years	**1:5** *(At least one L3 staff; 50%+ L2 staff)*	Focus on Prime Areas. Building trust (**#WeAreCompassionate**) and sensory exploration (**#WeAreCurious**).
Nursery	3 – 4 Years	**1:8** or **1:13** *(Depending on QTS/EYPS)*	Prime + Specific Areas. Fostering teamwork (**#WeAreCollaborative**) and active problem-solving (**#WeAreCreative**).
Reception	4 – 5 Years	**1:30** *(Standard limit; TA supported)*	Full Curriculum & EYFS Profile. Aiming high (**#WeAreAmbitious**), overcoming challenge (**#WeAreResilient**), and leading (**#WeAreInspiring**).

The Key Person System

Every child across all three phases is assigned a named **Key Person**.

- **Early Learners (2-Year-Olds):** The Key Person ensures **#WeAreCompassionate** through responsive caregiving, managing intimate care routines, settling-in processes, and supporting emotional co-regulation so toddlers feel secure enough to show **#WeAreCurious**.
- **Nursery & Reception:** The Key Person/Class Teacher models how **#WeAreCollaborative** by partnering with parents, co-planning learning opportunities, and helping children stay **#WeAreResilient** through transitions.

Curriculum, Pedagogy & School Learning Behaviours

Our EYFS curriculum is built upon **4 Overarching Principles**:

1. **A Unique Child:** Recognizing every child can be confident, self-assured, and show **#WeAreResilient**.
2. **Positive Relationships:** Showing **#WeAreCompassionate** and **#WeAreCollaborative** through strong key person partnerships.
3. **Enabling Environments:** Creating spaces where **#WeAreCurious** and **#WeAreCreative** through play and exploration.
4. **Learning & Development:** Helping children demonstrate **#WeAreAmbitious** learners who progress at their own rates.

Characteristics of Effective Learning & School Values

We weave our school learning behaviours directly through the statutory Characteristics of Effective Learning:

Characteristics of Effective Learning & School Learning Behaviour

▼	▼	▼
Playing & Exploring	**Active Learning**	**Creating & Thinking**
✦ #WeAreCurious	✦ #WeAreResilient	✦ #WeAreCreative
✦ #WeAreCollaborative	✦ #WeAreAmbitious	✦ #WeAreInspiring
(Investigating & playing)	(Persisting through challenge)	(Critical problem solving)

Phase Progression

- **Early Learners (2s):** Heavy focus on Prime Areas. Children learn that **#WeAreCompassionate** as they share resources, and **#WeAreCurious** as they explore sensory materials and language modelling.
- **Nursery (3–4s):** Consolidation of Prime Areas while introducing early phonics and math. Practitioners encourage children to show **#WeAreCreative** during story-making and **#WeAreCollaborative** during group play.
- **Reception (4–5s):** Balanced play and direct instruction in phonics, reading, writing, and math. Children demonstrate **#WeAreAmbitious** learners, taking pride in their achievements and proving **#WeAreInspiring** to their peers.

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to KS1.

The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and 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

Medium-term plans identify the intended learning outcomes for children. In addition, indoor/outdoor independent learning and adult directed planning are completed on a weekly and daily basis, they highlight the objectives for the week and detail the activities children will take part in to achieve these objectives. The school makes use of learning activities outside the classroom, where a planned programme of appropriate activities takes place at all times of year. Our practice of cross-curricular teaching and learning encourages children to make links and practice skills in a relevant and interesting way. NSA's school staff and Governors believe that all children should have access to a creative learning environment where children are treat as individuals and the way children learn is embraced.

Teaching and Learning

At NSA we are continually developing teaching and learning within EYFS and aim to provide each and every child with a well-balanced, stimulating and meaningful learning experience. We do this by:

- Providing children with a safe and nurturing environment in which they feel safe and secure to learn.
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the EYFS; a range of INSETS within school and through the Local Authority's CPD programme to develop the understanding that Teachers and Assistant Teachers have of how children in early years develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching; a carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the objectives of the seven areas of development by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Regular monitoring of our work to evaluate its impact on pupils' progress and their wider social, personal and emotional development.
- Continuous monitoring of teaching and learning to provide feedback for teachers so that they can identify next stages of learning and improve their practice.
- Peer observations across EYFS and Key Stage 1 to develop a better understanding of the curriculum in different year groups, share teaching skills and good practice and enable EYFS practitioners to ensure pupils are ready for Year 1.
- Regular lesson observations and learning walks by leadership and those with subject responsibilities to ensure consistency, share good practice and to provide feedback to promote school improvement.
- Encouraging the partnership between teachers and parents/carers that helps our children to progress in all areas of the curriculum and helps them to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement.
- Providing home learning opportunities which are appropriate for the age group and engaging for both parent and child.
- Providing supporting and interactive learning environments which provide extensive learning opportunities for children.
- Establishing good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the

children have been learning before joining our school.

Assessment, Transition & Progress Monitoring

- Two-Year-Old Progress Check: Completed for every child in Early Learners between ages 24 and 36 months. Highlighted strengths in the 3 Prime Areas reflect how #WeAreCurious and #WeAreCompassionate learners are developing. Shared in partnership with parents and health visitors.
- Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA): Administered individually within the first 6 weeks of Reception in a supportive, relaxed setting.
- EYFS Profile (EYFSP): Completed in the summer term of Reception. Children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as *'Meeting'* (Expected) or *'Not Yet Reaching'* (Emerging).
- Transitions: Internal transition "stay and play" sessions ensure children feel #WeAreResilient and confident moving between Early Learners, Nursery, and Reception.

Each child will be assessed in their first half term at school. Through observation staff will assess their attainment in the three prime areas and the four specific areas.

On-going assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff are involved in daily observations and assessments throughout the EYFS; they include child-initiated tasks and teacher-led activities in the inside and outside learning environments.

Reporting

The Reception class teachers will report to parents/ carers whether children are 'working at' expected levels of development, working towards' or 'working below' - not yet reaching expected levels - at the end of the Summer term. This is in line with the reporting requirements from the DfE (see above). Within the seven areas of learning there are statutory "Early learning goals", which establish age-related expectations for children to reach by the end of EYFS. These provide the basis for planning the teaching and learning programme in Reception. Progress will be shared with parents and carers during parent consultations in the Autumn half term, towards the end of the Spring term and at the end of the Summer term in a school report. All attainment data is shared with the Year1 teacher for continuity to support transition.

Induction and Home/School Links

Open events are held for parents of the prospective Nursery and Reception groups. The purpose of this meeting is to welcome all our families to NSA, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion and to emphasise the vital importance of home-school cooperation and mutual support. This marks the beginning of the home-school partnership, which we regard as high priority for the benefit of all our children.

Additional events take place during the year; these include stay and play sessions, the summer fare as well as the open events mentioned above. Parents are welcome to attend all or some of these activities.

Links will be made with the pre-school settings and where required the class teacher will make a visit in July. The class teacher and teaching assistants will conduct a welcome call with the parents/carers of each child.

Further communication systems include:

- Termly Newsletter
- Daily opportunity for brief updates at the point of dropping off or collecting children. Anything more than a few minutes' conversation will require an appointment to be made through the school office.
- Home/school communication via DoJo
- Email / telephone via the school office
- Progress meetings in Autumn and Spring Term
- Written reports for each individual child will be shared with parent in Summer Term
- Information meetings and workshops will take place throughout each school year, including the teaching of early reading and early maths skills.

Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEND)

Because **#WeAreCompassionate**, we welcome all children and adapt our environment and routines to meet individual needs. We celebrate diversity and ensure children with SEND are supported to show **#WeAreResilient** and **#WeAreAmbitious** learners alongside their peers.

At NSA we believe that all children matter and have equal rights - irrespective of the child's special educational need(s), disability, gender, creed or ethnicity. Consequently, we aim to be a fully inclusive school - as described in the school's Equality Policy. We give our children every opportunity to participate in a wide range of experiences in order to help them to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of each child's learning style, communication needs, disability and range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning. This is outlined in our Accessibility Plan, which is a document outlining how the school intends to meet the needs for all children to access learning and is revised annually.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The teaching in EYFS supports the social development of our children through the way we expect them to work with each other. We encourage children to work together and provide opportunities for them to discuss their ideas.

Equal opportunities

All children are entitled to access the EYFS curriculum which caters for their individual needs, offers equal access and opportunity and enables them to participate fully in all areas of the curriculum. In accordance with our Equal Opportunity Policy.

Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Role of the Early Years Lead

- Ensure teachers are familiar with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years and help them to plan for teaching and learning within the EYFS
- Lead by example in the way they teach in their own classroom
- Prepare, organise and lead CPD (Continuing Professional Development), with the support of the Head Teacher, Deputy Head and Lead Practitioner
- Work cooperatively with the SENDCO
- Attend CPD
- Communicate with parents
- Discuss progress regularly with the Senior Leadership Team and Early Years governor
- Lead, manage and monitor the implementation of the framework, including monitoring the quality of teaching and learning
- Keep the governing body informed about progress
- Ensure that the EYFS remains high profile in the school's development work

Statutory Safeguarding, Welfare & Health Requirements

Creating a safe space is essential for children to show **#WeAreAmbitious** and **#WeAreCurious** learners. Our school adheres strictly to all EYFS statutory welfare requirements:

Safer Recruitment & Personnel

- **DBS Checks:** No staff member or volunteer will commence work or be left unsupervised until an enhanced criminal record check (DBS) is formally received.
- **First Aid:** At least one paediatric first aid (PFA) qualified staff member is always on site and available.

Safeguarding, Attendance & Allegations

- **Unexplained Absences:** Staff demonstrate care by following up on unexplained absences on Day 1. At least **two emergency contact numbers** are maintained per child.
- **Reporting Thresholds:** The school reports any allegation of **harm** or serious safeguarding concerns to Ofsted/LADO immediately.
- **Banned Animals:** No banned dog breeds are permitted anywhere on the premises.

Health, Safer Sleep & Mealtime Safety

- **Safer Sleep Practices (2-Year-Olds & Young Children):** Continuous supervision for napping toddlers. Cot spaces kept clear of loose bedding/toys, with room temperatures maintained between **16–20°C**.
- **Safer Eating & Choking Prevention:** Active adult supervision during all mealtimes. Food served to 2-year-olds is prepared safely (e.g., lengthways slicing). Choking incidents are logged per school protocol.
- **Intimate Care:** Dignity, privacy, and hygiene are guaranteed through dedicated care plans.
- **Screen Time:** Screen use is purposeful and limited—ensuring it never replaces active play.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the EYFS Lead, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and Governing Body to ensure our staff continuously model how **#WeAreInspiring** educators. It is reviewed every two years or sooner if necessary.