



## SLINGSBY CP SCHOOL

### EYFS POLICY

#### Introduction

**'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.

#### What does the EYFS Curriculum at Slingsby look like?

At Slingsby School, we are very mindful of the opening remark above 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. We also strive to evolve and improve our curriculum offer, year on year, and so we are guided by the recommendations of the Ofsted Report "Strong Foundations in the First Years of School" published in October 2024. We endeavour to ensure our curriculum gives our children the foundational knowledge they need to succeed and that our teaching methods support children not only in their learning, but in remembering what they have learnt too. Consequently, it is designed with these guiding principles:

- An early focus on key knowledge and skills: how to communicate, read, write and calculate.
- Ambitious content which is carefully sequenced to build on and extend children's existing knowledge or prior learning. We want our children to build their learning from a place of security. Our curriculum is carefully planned so that children build on previous learning and are given time to practise what they have learned in play.
- 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.

- 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 and building their conceptual knowledge.
- Responding 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. This learning environment evolves throughout the year.
- 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.

### 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
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

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

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

### 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 story-times, 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. To support the children in the key foundational skill of writing, we spend time embedding the skills they will need for accurate transcription and composition through small steps. The children begin by developing their fine and gross motor movements and understanding of directional language through frequent 'Story Dough' sessions. This also allows further opportunity for shared talk with an adult and their peers. These sessions run alongside our 'Drawing Club' where children again have the opportunity to talk and develop their understanding of language and sentence composition, whilst refining and practising their mark making so that, as the year progresses, correct letter formation becomes automatic, efficient and fluent. This is complimented by short handwriting lessons which begin in the first term of the Reception year.

### 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, as well as fostering the development of their executive function. 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

***"The best forms of assessment pick up children's misunderstandings quickly and provide early opportunities to help children who need extra teaching and practice".***

*Ofsted, Strong Foundations in the first years of school, October 2024*

When children enter our setting in their Reception year, they complete the DFE statutory baseline assessments within the first six weeks. In addition, staff complete their own assessments against the Development Matters framework with an additional focus on pencil grip and understanding of numbers to 10. This allows us to have a clear starting point for each child. As the year progresses, these assessments are repeated at regular intervals to ensure that children are on track to achieve a good level of development.

Staff in the setting have a clear understanding of what we want the children to learn and spend time getting to know the children well, so that we are able to provide additional teaching or practise in a timely fashion. Staff communicate with each other so that any gaps in learning are swiftly identified and steps taken to fill them. Our Phonics programme (Little Wandle Letters and Sounds) follows a robust assessment framework which tracks each individual child and identifies specific gaps. The programme includes specific keep up sessions so that teaching can be swiftly put in place that allows the child to keep up with their peers.

At the end of the Reception year, a summative assessment of each child is made against the seventeen Early Learning Goals and an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed and shared with parents. In addition, to ensure key foundational knowledge has been learned we are developing end of year assessments in the following areas: pencil grip; reading fluency; letter and number formation; understanding of the numbers to 10; number bond knowledge and spelling.

## 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.

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.