

## **St Helen Auckland Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”* Guidance for EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Most children join us, for a morning or afternoon session on a daily basis, at the beginning of the school year in which they are four. They begin attending school full time at the start of the school year in which they turn five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

### Aims

To create a safe, caring and stimulating environment where everyone (staff and pupils) feel valued.

To provide a broad and balanced curriculum which is developed and created using the children’s interests.

To promote the value of play.

To provide opportunities which encourage co-operation and independence.

To develop the child’s enthusiasm to learn and the skills necessary to further that learning.

To build positive relationships with all those involved in the child’s development.

To develop learning in the outdoors.

## **A Unique Child**

St Helens Auckland Foundation Stage Unit recognises that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Broom Cottages Primary and Nursery School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our unit we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

### **Welfare**

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

We understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2007. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Positive Relationships**

In St Helen Auckland Foundation Unit we recognise that children learn to be strong, independent and form secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

#### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We 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;
- the teacher offers to visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class and allowing free access to the children's 'Observation' booklets
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- A meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: Star of the week, SEAL assemblies, Sports Day, End of Topic activities etc.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school a member of the EYFS staff acts as a 'Key Person' to children in EYFS. Where children continue to attend preschool provision / child minders, while only attending school part time, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children's achievements.

## **Enabling Environments**

In St Helen Auckland Foundation Unit we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

The Planning within the EYFS follows Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans, which are based around half termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these MTP's in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual 'Observation' booklets as well as baseline/assessment sheets. They also contain information provided by parents and other settings.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELG's and assessment scales. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

### **The Learning Environment**

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely.

There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and located equipment and resources independently. The EYFS has it own enclosed outdoor area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers opportunities for the children to explore use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 6 areas of learning.

## Transition

### Nursery

- Parents are invited to an informal visit with their child to meet their key worker, outline the daily routines and curriculum, and complete necessary paperwork with the school secretary.
- Parents are encouraged to stay with their child for up to one hour during the first visit. After which the length of time the child / adult stays is agreed in conjunction with the parent and practitioner.
- A booklet and any information regarding the Foundation Stage is offered to each parent.
- A home-school contract is discussed which initiates parental involvement.

### Transition to Yr 1

We ensure transition from Reception to year 1 is as smooth as possible. We invite all Reception parents to a parents evening in July when we discuss the Y1 curriculum, introduce the Y1 staff and give parents the opportunity to ask questions. We have a taster afternoon in July when the YR children visit their new teachers and TAs in their respective classrooms. Reception children will join KS1 assemblies in the Summer Term and begin to spend time outside at break time with KS1 children, supported by Foundation Stage staff.

Foundation stage and KS 1 staff work closely together to ensure a smooth transition. Staff have meetings to discuss progress of children throughout the phase to ensure everyone involved with the children are fully aware of their previous experiences in school. We have taken parental views into consideration when preparing our transition phase.

## Learning and Development

In St Helen Auckland Foundation Unit we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

### Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1/2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

### Play

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.” EYFS

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as 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.

### Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.” EYFS

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

### *Creativity and Critical Thinking*

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.” EYFS

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions.

Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

### *Areas of Learning*

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS coordinator and early year's practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the EYFS coordinator and practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and subject coordinators will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

### **Outside Agencies**

We have good relationships with the feeder Sure Start centre and are able to visit children joining the school in their own nursery setting. We also have opportunities to meet with other Foundation Stage teachers through cluster meetings. We also have a good working relationship with other agencies to support children's development.

- Early Years advisory services.
- Behaviour support team.
- Lending Library.
- Durham County Learning Support Services.
- School Health Visitor.
- School Nurse / Auditory Service/ School doctor.

## Staffing

### Foundation Stage Team

Miss Rebecca Jemmerson (Teacher)  
Mrs Heather Airey (Teacher)  
Mrs Jen Hardwick (Teaching Assistant)  
Mrs Kim Gauci (Teaching Assistant)  
Miss Ruth Neil (Teaching Assistant)  
Miss Gemma Sumpton (Teaching Assistant)  
Mrs Judith Cooper (Teaching Assistant)

First Aider - Jen Hardwick

Paediatric First Aiders - Gemma Sumpton, Ruth Neil, Judith Cooper, Jen Hardwick, Rebecca Jemmerson

### Senior Management Support

Head Teacher - Maeve Mackenzie  
Deputy Head Teacher - Janet Elmes

