



EARL STERNDALE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Early Years Policy

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Our school is very special and quite unique, as are the pupils, teachers and members of the wider community we serve. We are a very small school, located in a rural area within a small community where everyone takes responsibility for the wellbeing of others, particularly for those who are younger.

Early learning should start from what the children already know and should acknowledge that there is potential in all children which must be accessed through the activities they are engaged in.

Early Years are the formative years during which time the whole child must develop at his/her own rate of progress.

Early learning shapes attitudes to knowledge and to others.

Early experiences form the foundations for life.

Early learning should give children time and space to grow.

Early learning is holistic and interactive; it is best presented by first-hand experience.

Early learning is continual and continuously shifting through interaction.

Quality play is fundamental to early learning.

Confidence, self-discipline and self-motivation are highly valued in early learning.

Comfort, safety and security are essential for early learning.

Children must develop self-esteem and independence through their early experiences.

The adults to whom the children relate are of central importance to their development.

Aims

We aim to provide quality teaching and learning throughout a child's stay in our school. We begin when a child first enters school by securing quality provision for all new entrants irrespective of gender, race or social background. As a small school we are particularly well placed to meet the needs of the individual child and ensure this by adhering to the following underlying principles of quality provision recommended by the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- To enable children to develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually in order to achieve success at their own rate.
- To encourage children to play, talk, listen and to develop self management and choice skills.
- To support a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum through high quality resources, especially outdoors.
- To encourage effective learning through active involvement, high motivation and interest.
- To involve parents/carers fully in the children's learning and to liaise closely with other relevant settings and agencies.
- To support maximum integration with pupils who have learning difficulties, within the Foundation Stage, dependent upon the needs of individual children.

The curriculum is planned to be:

- active - based on hands on involvement.
- personally meaningful - what children are interested in.

- experiential - learning by doing.
- exploratory - curiosity as a key motivator.
- developmentally appropriate - matching age and stage.
- social - stressing co-operation.
- creative - using invention and imagination.
- process-orientated - help given in appropriate stages.
- integrated - holistic approach to learning.
- rigorous - stressing the children's responsibility.

Through this, children develop a sense of self, self-worth and an ability to put that alongside a sense of others. We encourage a 'sense of others' in all aspects of school life and remind all the children of how they are 'role models' for each other. As adults we have an even greater responsibility to 'set a good example' and therefore we encourage the children to listen as well as talk. We feel very strongly that the partnership and communication with parents should be an open and honest one, built on mutual trust and respect.

How Aims Are Fulfilled

The Foundation Stage will be staffed at a level appropriate to needs of young children.

Children will be encouraged to play, with sensitive and active adult involvement and intervention, both indoors and out.

Staff will offer extensive opportunity for children's learning. Good listening skills will be encouraged.

The EYFS will form the curriculum guidance used by staff in planning the curriculum, to enable most children to achieve those goals by the start of Y1. Where children clearly have the ability to reach those goals before that time appropriate provision will be made for them.

Children showing signs of difficulty with learning will be identified, monitored and early intervention and additional support will be provided in co-ordination with the school's SENCO.

Parents/carers will be fully informed about children's needs, progress and achievements through regular informal and formal face to face meetings and written communication.

Children will be encouraged to spend time to produce work of quality and depth.

Children will be given opportunities to make choices, explore their environment and develop persistence and curiosity, through a range of carefully planned activities, covering all the areas of learning.

Children will be given and use role models by practitioners to encourage respect, tolerance and understanding of others' cultures, beliefs and needs.

Children will be helped to understand the difference between right and wrong.

Children will be helped to become independent, regarding personal hygiene, dressing and eating.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of Learning and Development which are all very important and interconnected. The three prime areas of communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. It is very important for children to develop the three prime areas first, as they are most essential for a child's healthy development and future learning. Also, as children grow the prime areas will help them to develop skills in the four specific areas of literacy, mathematics, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

We firmly believe that all seven areas of learning and development must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult led activities and child-initiated activities. We want all our children to learn by playing and exploring, by being active and through creative and critical thinking. We use both the indoor and outdoor environments so that children can develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. We work hard to give every child the opportunity to achieve their best as we believe every child is a unique child and constantly learning.

Early Learning Goals – Prime Areas

Communication and Language - Provides opportunities for children to: experience a rich language environment, develop children's confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to encourage children to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical Development - Provides opportunities for young children to: be active and interactive, develop their coordination, control and movement, help children understand the importance of physical activity and to help children make health choices in relation to food.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development - Helps children to: develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, form positive relationships, develop respect for others, develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings.

Early Learning Goals - Specific Areas

Literacy - To encourage children to: link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write by giving children access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics - To provide children with opportunities to: develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers,

calculating simple addition, subtraction problems and describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

Understanding the World - To guide children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design - To enable children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Organisation

The Foundation Stage is an integral part of Earl Sterndale School. The Foundation Stage operates as a discrete unit within the school in order to provide a more secure and informal introduction to school for children than the more formal organisation of Y1/2. All pupils are fully part of Earl Sterndale School although they may not take part in all aspects of school life initially.

As Foundation children are part of a mixed age class, the transition to Y1 is very subtle, and children generally find this transition very easy.

Progression and continuity, linking the Early Learning Goals with the National Curriculum, will be planned very carefully. Links are already very strong as a child has the same teacher for three years.

Everyone in our school community has an active role to play as an Educator, 'role model' and caring friend. From day one our older children, along with the adults in school, work hard to blend all those essential ingredients together to provide a stimulating, caring and secure environment that ensures the quality provision all children need and deserve.

Induction

We aim to visit all children in their pre-school settings before joining us for their induction visits. We have close links with Flagg nursery and local Buxton nurseries. The Reception teacher/ Teaching Assistant will visit the pre-school children in their settings, talk and play alongside them during the summer term. A transition meeting to discuss children's records is also held between staff and pre-school settings.

Children are invited to visit our Infant class for four sessions comprising of mornings, afternoons and two sessions with lunch where they will have the chance to play, meet their peers in Year 1 and Year 2, play in the infant outdoor area/garden and main playground.

When children start school in September, all children have the opportunity to be in school 5 full days. If parents feel, for any reason that this choice is not appropriate for their child this can be discussed with staff and the Headteacher.

Children are introduced to the life of the wider school gently as they become ready. Playtimes are separate during the first week or so, allowing the children to settle into their new class in a quieter atmosphere, building to full participation in whole school play and lunch times. This also applies to assemblies, gradually building up to joining in as fully as possible by the October term holiday.

Supporting Language and Literacy

Early in the first half term at school, children will begin to bring home a reading and sounds book so that parents/carers can support their child with the sounds he/she has learnt at school. This will be explained in more detail at the meeting for parents during the induction visits.

The first books that children bring home to share with parents/ carers will be picture books and then books with simple repetitive text and some high frequency sight word to learn.

Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. We work closely together with parents/carers to ensure a two-way flow of information; knowledge and expertise which has a positive impact on a child's development.

We aim to develop this by:

- Outlining how the EYFS is being delivered during the new parents July meeting, to enable parents to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home and how they can access more information.
- Sending curriculum letters home periodically to keep parents informed and updating the website regularly.
- Operating an 'open door' policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Sharing progress at school through 'Learning Journeys' with parents. individual next steps learning at parents' evenings.
- Providing an annual written report in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales.
- Inviting parents to social occasions so that families can get to know one another and feel a part of the school, to support school in raising funds to provide extras that enhance the education of all children in school.
- Discussing any concerns regarding special educational needs which will be discussed with parents and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) for the school (Rebecca Gill).

Record Keeping and Assessment

A detailed Foundation Stage Profile, records and assessments will be kept for every child. During the first half term in school the children will participate in Baseline Assessment which provide us with an objective assessment of our 'starting point' and a reference point from which to judge their subsequent progress. Careful observations and assessments will be made of all children by staff, informed by a sound knowledge of children's development and learning styles.

Ongoing assessment in all areas of learning will be used to inform staff about the future learning needs of each child.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles (EYFSP) and assessments will be completed at the end of the child's last term in the Foundation Stage and outcomes shared with parents. Early Years providers must report EYFS Profile results to local authorities, upon request.

Parents are invited to consultation meetings twice a year, however with regular informal 'chats' and an 'open door' policy some parents may feel it is not necessary to attend and if the need arises we are more than willing to make appointments to meet with parents at other times. An annual written report is given at the end of each academic year.

Assessment is in line with the Government, Local Authority and statutory requirements

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) –

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reception-baseline-assessment>

Parent information – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reception-baseline-assessment-information-for-parents>

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. These are recorded and sent to the baseline government service.