

# SHORTSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY



## Early Years

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life, and the support to reach 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.” (Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage)*

In our school all children join us from September of the year in which they are five to complete the EYFS in the Reception year.

### Aims

- For the child to develop a positive self-image and see him/herself as an effective learner
- To develop a positive attitude towards learning
- To develop concentration skills
- To promote independence, responsibility, perseverance and creativity
- To provide a rich and stimulating environment where children feel confident to risk-take
- For the child to develop effective relationships with adults and other children.

We believe that every child has a full part to play in the life of the School. Each child has the right to feel valued and secure. They have the right to access a curriculum that is relevant to their stage of development. The emphasis throughout the Early Years Unit is ‘Learning Through Play’ whereby the child feels safe and secure without any pressure applied during those developmental stages. Learning Through Play incorporates both child led spontaneous adventures as well as adult led planned learning; both of which are highly valued and required throughout the Early Years.

### Teaching Staff

The Foundation Stage provides high quality teaching and learning delivered by Qualified Teachers and Cover Supervisors. Alongside the teachers and cover supervisors, the Foundation Stage supports development by ensuring high quality Learning Support staff. Every member of staff have high expectations for achievement and behaviour. As well as being involved in direct teaching, the staff offer a supportive role for the children’s learning - reinforcing, intervening, interacting, extending and challenging the child initiated play. All adult direct learning is planned by the teachers and is linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum. Assessments and observations are carried out by all the staff.

Each child is assigned a Key Person upon their arrival in the Foundation Stage Unit. This person is who they feel most secure and comfortable with. All children are observed on a regular basis by their Key Person, who record how their development is progressing by linking to each stage of the curriculum. As well as having an individual Key Person the children are supported by all members of staff and who will ensure they are safe at all times. Each child has a narrative observation completed half termly, providing a detailed account of how they are developing.

**Areas of Learning:** The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning broken into Prime and Specific Areas.

**Prime Areas:**

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language Development
- Physical Development

**Specific Areas:**

- Literacy Development
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding the World Development
- Expressive Arts and Design Development

As well as the Areas of Learning there are also three **Characteristics of Learning**. These include:

- Active Learning – ‘Motivated’
- Playing and Exploring – ‘Engagement’
- Critically and Creative Thinking – ‘Processing skills’

Within our Communication and Language Development we use the phonics programme ERR, which incorporates pure sounding of letters. This is started at the beginning of the Reception year and takes place twice a day. We also feel it is important this is supported at home and encourage parents to practice with their children the ERR pure sounds. We send home ERR letter sounds and when the children are ready the ERR set of words. By working together to develop children’s phonics we will support and develop children’s reading skills.

All children will be given a picture book in school to start developing reading. This will develop their ability to describe images and sequence a story without words supporting their imaginative development. In school we aim to hear children read as often as possible, this includes guided reading sessions which helps develop children’s knowledge of a book, the structure as well as using their imagination to think about what is happening and finally being confident in reading the words in front of them. The children will be given a username and password enabling them to access a computerised reading programme called ‘Bug Club.’ This is assessable both at school and home and we encourage children to assess this at home as it will support both their decoding and blending skills as well as their interest in books and reading.

Children are encouraged to take home a ‘Reading For Pleasure’ book to share with their families, this may have no words, simple or complex sentences whereby they will require it read to them. We have a home reading record book which is important means of communicating with each other and so we ask for it to be completed as this will help support the school in understanding how the child is progressing.

All areas of learning throughout the curriculum are intertwined, in order for children to develop these areas cannot 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. Each area for learning provides Early Learning Goals (ELG’s) which define the expectations most children reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Curriculum is planned on three levels – long term (broad aims), medium term (half-termly topics, activities and learning objectives) and short term (weekly activities with specific intentions for learning and differentiation). Formative assessment informs future planning to ensure progression and challenge for each individual. As children learn holistically; the curriculum will be delivered through topics that consider children’s individual interests and needs.

Children are encouraged to:

- Talk about their experiences, share ideas and reach decisions by learning through play activities
- Develop an awareness of their position at home, at school and within the wider community
- Accept responsibility for their actions
- Question and explain, to interact socially and formally using clear audible speech and to listen carefully to what others have to say
- Work together and co-operate as part of a group

### **The Learning Environment**

The structure of the Early Years Curriculum provides a stimulating learning environment whereby children are encouraged to explore and learn securely and safely. This includes areas of quiet, peaceful rest as well as active, motivating stimulation.

The learning environment is structured according to the seven areas of the curriculum enabling children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The Foundation Stage classroom has an outdoor area and access to the rest of the school grounds, including pond, garden area, and the nature garden, all of which has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and to work on a larger freer scale. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Children have the opportunity to engage in adult led activities as well as initiating their own whilst exploring their natural environment and developing their knowledge of the world.

### **Play**

'Learning Through Play' supports children in their exploration and develops their learning experiences, all of which helps them make sense of the world. They develop an understanding of the importance of working together, building upon ideas and thoughts whilst understanding 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.

### **Observation and Assessment**

During the first half term in school each child will be assessed by a member of the Foundation Team. The baseline information will enable the teaching staff to assess and determine where each child is in their development and provide us with appropriate next steps for their learning. 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, which are carried out by the Foundation Stage staff as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's learning journals. Their Learning Journals are reviewed termly to monitor children's progress and identify next steps and specific needs. This information is shared with parents through interim and end of year reports, as well as consultation evenings.

Each child has an assessment carried out half termly to track their progress and development. This is completed by the teachers and members of Foundation Stage staff. We complete ERR assessments every half term to track the child's progress in developing their sound and letter recognition as well as each child completing an independent writing assessment termly, which enables the Foundation Stage staff to monitor where the child is and what next steps need to be put into place to ensure the children keep developing and progressing in their learning. We also assess each child's reading and mathematical development to monitor each child's progression.

We use an ICT programme called '2Simple' which enables the Foundation Stage Staff to carry out observations on a regular basis whilst engaging fully with the children. The children are also able to observe themselves or others using this programme through the support of the staff explaining how to use the system.

Their Learning Journey is collated with written observations; child initiated observations, parent observations as well as photographic evidence. We send home every half term a Home Observation Sheet. This is to be completed by the children's family either with the child or by the parent and informs staff of others interests they have, all of which supports and enhances the evidence towards the Foundation Stage Curriculum.

Cohorts are tracked according to percentage deemed to be well below, below, expected and exceeding during Autumn baseline and in the Summer data submission, to show progress in areas of focus and as a cohort.

	Well below	Below	Expected	Exceeding
Autumn	22 -36 months and below	30 – 50 months	40-60 months	ELG
Summer	30 – 50 months and below	40-60 months	ELG	

### **Children's Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Throughout the Early Years curriculum there is an emphasis on positive behaviour, which is achieved through children being involved in creating the class rules. A variety of rewards are given for thoughtful and kind actions, as well as for academic achievement including stickers, hot spots and beanie going home for the weekend. In the Foundation Stage we appreciate how difficult it is for all children to enter a new environment but especially challenging for those children and families who have English as an additional language. We encourage parents to be involved as much as possible, and support children who are EAL with visual displays, signs in a variety of languages so they feel comfortable, secure and safe. We ensure there is role play and dressing up costumes of different cultures and traditions, so children feel a sense of belonging and security. We encourage older children to support those who speak similar languages and we celebrate a variety of cultures and religious celebrations.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children are given equal access to the curriculum irrespective of race, gender or ability. Mutual respect and tolerance of all cultures are promoted.

### **SEN and More Able and Talented**

At our school children have access to all areas of the EYFS regardless of their ability. We set suitable learning challenges and respond to each child's individual needs. Assessment against the Early Learning Goals allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, parents will be informed and support may be provided in a learning mentor. If the progress is limited observations by the SENCo will be carried out to assess the child's needs. A range of factors are considered to enable the children to learn more effectively including through differentiated planning to ensure the teaching is achievable for all children no matter what their individual needs are.

Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to individual needs. There may be a need to involve external agencies.

Where a child is identified as having an aptitude of learning in a specific area, activities and challenges are provided to ensure their needs are met.

### **Health and Safety**

All staff are conversant with the Health and Safety Policy and relevant regulations in the Borough Health and Safety document and plan accordingly. Risk assessments are carried out when planning each learning activity to ensure that the children are safe. Where risks are

identified these are carefully managed through a range of strategies. Where risks are considered too great the activity is modified accordingly, or not carried out. Key staff are fully first aiders. All staff have been trained in fire safety. As well as this the school has 5 members of staff who are designated Fire Wardens.

### **Moderation**

We carry our internal moderation between Pre-School and YR to ensure we are supporting and developing all children within our Foundation Unit to a high standard and providing outstanding quality. Working together ensures all members of staff are able to discuss, plan and adapt their teaching and environment where needed to allow the children to flourish and grow throughout their time in the Foundation Unit. This is carried out between the EYFS Lead, Pre-School Manager and Reception teacher every half term focusing on a different area of learning.

As well as internal moderation members of staff from our Pre-School as well as Foundation Stage classroom attend cluster moderation meetings termly and Borough Hall moderation meetings with other schools which enables all members of staff to continue progressing their professional development.

This has led to many visits from other schools either within our cluster or from further afield who wish to observe our Foundation Stage Unit to gain ideas of how to manage their unit, how to ensure outdoor learning is incorporated within the day to day routine and think of how they can adapt their learning environments or teaching styles to support their children in a different way. We also support trainee teachers who are starting out in their careers and wish to discover new and exciting ways of teaching young children whilst keeping a natural and child centred approach.

We have worked with the local educational establishments including the University of Bedfordshire in providing continual professional development courses, using our Foundation Stage Unit encouraging them to observe good and outstanding practice.

### **Monitoring**

To ensure each member of the Foundation Stage Unit including Preschool, the key people are monitoring regularly. The EYFS Lead and Preschool Manager monitor the observations of each Key Person, including narrative and iPad observations. This takes place on a weekly to half termly basis, providing support and ensuring each member of staff have the opportunity to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the EYFS curriculum. The EYFS Lead monitors the Reception Class Key Person's observations, both narrative and iPad, on a regular basis. There is regular feedback to each member of staff, providing clear next steps for their development as well as positive attributes which they bring to the learning environment for all the children. This is an important area of developing the staff involved as it ensures all new members or new to the EYFS are supported, trained and developed to promote and create an outstanding enabling environment for the children to richly develop. All members of staff either within the Preschool or the Reception class are trained internally regularly. The EYFS Lead and Preschool Manager hold weekly staff meetings developing clear understanding and knowledge of the curriculum using moderation techniques. The EYFS Lead hold's half termly staff meetings with the Reception team and use similar moderation styles to develop each member of the team in the EYFS curriculum. The EYFS Lead and Preschool Manager liaise with the Head Teacher to ensure she is aware of the continued professional development of the staff. As part of the monitoring process the EYFS Lead and Preschool Manager ensure accuracy and support are given to each member of staff. This information is included as part of each staff member's appraisal and review termly.

#### Monitoring Timetable Preschool

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Staff Observations	iPad	Long Observations	iPad	Long Observations	iPad	Long Observations
Data input	Baseline Preschool					Complete data sheet for all

	add for children as they join the unit. Analyse for planning and assessment.					children.  Analyse for next steps and progress.
Appraisal reviews	Target setting and agreement		Review			Review against monitoring outcomes.

### **Transition**

We have a Transition Policy which we encourage parents to refer to at times of transition in their children's lives. This is an important time for children and something they experience many times in their lives. It is our aim to make the transition from pre-school to Reception, and from Reception to year 1 as smooth as possible for every child. To make this possible we have strong established links with our Pre-school and Year 1. We work together regularly and through close communication we provide a positive smooth time of change for everyone involved.

Staff meet on a regular basis over the year to share information on individual children and their needs and requirements. Regular visits are made between the settings to meet and get to know the children, establishing positive relationships with children as they prepare to move through the school. Parents are invited with the children to experience their new setting before they are due to move on. At this meeting information is provided to the parents and children are able to take part in a range of activities. The staff also meet to share handover information, and discuss individual children to ensure their needs are met. The transition process is managed by the class teachers and pre-school manager.

Children in other provisions will be invited to visit Shortstown Primary School to ensure their parents can speak to the Foundation Stage Staff as well as the child gains confidence in their new environment.

### **Leadership and Management**

The day to day running and organisation of the lies with the EYFS Lead. The EYFS Lead also has responsibility for maintaining and ordering resources. The budget for Early Years is set by the Headteacher and Governors.