

SNITTERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their 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.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Snitterfield Primary School children are admitted to Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Snitterfield Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Snitterfield Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond; enabling choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

Curriculum

The Early Years Curriculum is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

At Snitterfield, we embrace The Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within our Early Years setting. These principles are:

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

Principles into Practice

A Unique Child

At Snitterfield Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and 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 and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this 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 learn effectively.

- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Promoting equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Snitterfield Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open afternoons and induction meetings.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their home setting or childcare provision prior to their starting school.
- Providing a handbook of information about commencing Reception at Snitterfield.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Providing an induction meeting for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding an open evening early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through school newsletters and via the school app.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception.
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.

- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.

Enabling Environments

At Snitterfield Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

Learning and Developing

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in any Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three *Prime Areas* are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The *Specific Areas*:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Letters & Sounds" document and in line with school policy.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

At Snitterfield we ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and Exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

'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.'

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, 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.

Active Learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

'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.'

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

Creating and Thinking Critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

“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.”

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Teaching Strategies and Learning Styles

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult’s response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult’s role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing.

In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times they will participate in a child’s game, extending it where possible.

Observation and Assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children’s development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place.

In the final term of the Foundation Stage, we provide the parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the teacher in preparation for Year 1.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child’s new teacher and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum.

This is an opportunity for staff to:

- To go through the school Prospectus
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals

- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag if requested
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to Reception

Induction and Stay & Play sessions - The children are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend time in their new class. This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.

Where possible arrangements are made for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting.

September Intake – when children join the school in September the following procedures will apply in order that they can gradually adjust to their new surroundings:

- During the first week, home visits will be carried out and the children will attend school in the mornings and over the lunch break
- In the second week children will attend for the full day thereafter.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; all of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Snitterfield Primary irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that all of our children will achieve their potential. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our separate policy on Inclusion.

Safeguarding

'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.' (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Snitterfield Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe - 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. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Snitterfield's Safeguarding Children Policy.) All staff are aware of the Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures and will report the disclosure to the DSL immediately.

Confidentiality: Staff are unable to offer absolute confidentiality. We will reassure children that staff will act in their best interests and that this may involve sharing information if the child is at risk of harm.

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They have access to water at all times.

Monitoring and Review

- Monitoring will take place in line with school monitoring procedures.
- Data is regularly collected and shared with the governors.
- This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.