



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

*Reviewed: March 2025*  
*Next Review: December 2026*

## **Wharncliffe Side Primary School Foundation Stage Policy**

School contact number: 0114 2682379

### **School Mission Statement**

Where children's love and curiosity for lifelong learning blossoms through inspirational teaching in a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

Nurturing confidence, nurturing potential, nurturing success.

### **Pedagogy – Our vision for the children**

At Wharncliffe Side we have a collaborative and reflective pedagogy, with inspiration from the Friedrich Froebel Approach, this values the importance of developing the child in all areas – socially, academically, emotionally, physically and spiritually. We believe in developing the whole child through a nurturing approach which will prepare them to be members of society. We also love to educate our children about the natural world by making use of our wonderful surroundings in our forest school sessions. Froebel believed that nature provides an ideal environment for children to develop their senses, curiosity and appreciation for the world around them. We follow children's interests and ideas to develop independent thinking and foster a lifelong love of learning with children who are resilient and always try their best. Our inclusive approach means that all children learn together, including those from our integrated resource units. We aim for our children to leave our setting prepared for the next stage of their education with the characteristics of an effective learning, such as motivation, critical thinking and engagement.

We seek to create an environment that reflects these core values:

- Inclusivity
- Independence
- Nurturing
- Resilience
- Collaboration

### **Curriculum Intent**

Our EYFS curriculum is designed on the guiding principles of EYFS and encourage independent, inquisitive and happy learners. We recognise children's prior learning and various starting points, and create a holistic approach that maximises cross-curricular links and builds strong foundations for their future.

Our EYFS curriculum is specifically designed for both Nursery and Reception, and evolves to provide children with important foundational skills and knowledge for the next stage in their learning.

We work in partnership as a foundation unit as well as with our parents, carers and other settings/professionals to provide the best possible start, ensuring each unique child reaches their full potential.

Our enabling environments and warm, skilful adult interactions, support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration right from the start. We believe that high level engagement ensures high level attainment. We therefore provide an engaging curriculum that maximises opportunities for meaningful cross-curricular links and learning experiences, as well as promoting the unique child by offering extended periods of play and sustained shared thinking.

By the end of Nursery, our intent is for children to make good progress from their starting points, with the aim to reach age related expectations. By the end of Reception, our intent is to ensure that all children make at least good progress from their starting points with the aim to achieve a good level of development in their Early Learning Goals which will equip them with the skills and knowledge to have a smooth transition into Year 1. We monitor the foundational skills and knowledge in both year groups and share these with their next teachers to provide opportunities to plug gaps and ensure all fundamentals are addressed.

## **Implementation**

Pupils learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities and challenges in both settings. The weekly timetables are carefully structured so that children in nursery have daily phonics inputs and group time sessions focussed on directed teaching of maths, Understanding of the World or Expressive Art and Design. The sessions end with story times, P4C, SEAL or massage. These are then followed up in the provision through specific planning of their learning environment.

In Reception the children have daily phonics sessions as well as rigorous teacher led sessions in Literacy, Maths, Understanding the World and Expressive Art and Design. These sessions are followed by group work. This focused group time enables the teacher to systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning. Both settings are also fortunate to have outdoor learning on a daily basis and have the opportunity to explore the natural surroundings during Forest School sessions. Children are provided with many opportunities to engage in 'exploration' throughout a variety of experiences, which are carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. The curriculum is planned for the inside and outside and is planned in a cross-curricular way to enable all aspects of the children's development, sustained thinking and active learning. Our bespoke curriculum informs our medium term planning or CIG's as they are referred to in reception, which then informs weekly planning and success criterion for the sessions being delivered.

Early reading and phonics is at the heart of our curriculum. We show fidelity to the Little Wandle scheme for phonics at Wharnccliffe Side. In Nursery, children follow the foundations of phonics programme in preparation for reception. In reception, children follow Little Wandle faithfully to support them in meeting good outcomes for reading. Children are sent home with a fully decodable phonics reading book that is tailored and suited to their individual phonics level. A rigorous and sequential approach to the reading curriculum with Little Wandle develops pupils' fluency, confidence and enjoyment in reading. At all stages throughout the delivery of the programme, children's reading attainment is assessed and gaps are addressed quickly and effectively. Assessments are made termly and reviewed every 3 weeks to plug any gaps, these are also shared with parents to support children at home.

Books are celebrated throughout our curriculum with 'book of the week' and focus stories in nursery, to narrative studies in reception. Both settings also incorporate 'Helicopter Stories' into their half termly planning to give the children the opportunities to be the storyteller, develop vocabulary and enhance their oracy skills.

Maths is also a crucial part of our curriculum, equipping our children with the key knowledge and skills they need to subitise, count and understand the composition and value of number, as well as delve into topics such as shape and pattern. In nursery the development matters statements are followed for 0-3 and 3-4 year olds with many opportunities provided in group time session and the provision to develop a love of maths. In reception we follow the Maths Mastery approach with an emphasis on studying key skills of number composition, comparison, counting, ordinality and cardinality. We also cover aspects of shape space and measure through the White Rose scheme of work. Pupils learn through games and tasks using concrete manipulatives which can then be incorporated into the provision. This approach to teaching

Maths ensures children gain progressive mathematical knowledge and skills as they continue their journey through KS1.

We also use a range of additional interventions to support, enhance and scaffold children who may not be reaching their potential. Some examples of this include Little Wandle daily interventions to support phonics, and also LEAP and Stories for Talking to support language development.

The characteristics of effective learning are also viewed as an integral part of all areas of learning and are reflected in our observations and assessments of children. These are tracked regularly and discussed as a staff team.

Class teachers set key priorities (targets) for each child each term. These are then tracked and supported by key workers with all evidence of progress being documented on Tapestry – our online observation tool, to share with parents. Formal assessments are recorded using our Whole school tracking system 'Tracker+'. These summative assessments are completed termly to judge each child's progress in the 7 areas of learning. We also produce headline data termly to share in EYFS staff meeting in order to have a professional discussion amongst colleagues of pupils strengths and areas for development.

### **Impact**

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having happy and confident children demonstrating the core values and characteristics of effective learning as they transition into the next stage of their learning be that Reception or Y1.

Through setting key priorities for each child termly, we are able to look at the foundational skills and ensure we are plugging 'gaps', it also gives us the opportunity to offer bespoke interventions e.g. for PSED support. These observations can then be used to support teachers termly assessments and guide potential next steps for each child, this includes careful consideration of children with SEND or pupil premium. These can also be shared with parents on Tapestry who can further support at home.

By sharing headlines as a staff team each term, all staff that work in EYFS have a clear understanding of the numbers of children working at age related expectation, and know how to support those who are not. Trends can be identified and acted upon and training can be put in place e.g. language development courses due to speech and language concerns.

Pupil progress meetings also take place termly where concerns for pupils can be addressed with the headteacher and SENDCO if needed so SLT have a clear picture of EYFS in the school.

Our overall aim in nursery is for the children to achieve age related expectations and prepare them to be 'school ready' with assessments and activities during the summer term along with a smooth transition into reception. In reception we aim to meet the National and Local Authority data for children achieving Good Level of Development and equip our children with the skills needed to succeed in KS1.

### **Classes**

Children in the nursery integrated resource 'Little acorns': 1:2 ratio

2-3 year olds: Seedlings - 1:5 ratio

3-4 year olds: Saplings - 1:13 ratio

The reception cohort: Ash – 1:30 ratio (in a mixed class alongside Y1 pupils)

### **Parental Involvement**

We welcome parents/carers as partners in their children's education. We value the contribution parents make and recognise the many benefits that close links between home and school bring. Staff are always

willing to discuss progress, development and any problems. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning by contributing home observations and commenting on practitioner observations of their child on Tapestry. There are also home learning activities for parents to be involved in during the half term. Twice a year parents are also invited into school for parents evening where they have the opportunity to discuss and be involved in setting targets for their child. We make a special effort to be flexible, arranging meetings and other opportunities to include working parents. We also run parent workshops and other activities. In nursery this involves Forest Schools and Stay and Make sessions each term to engage parents in their child's learning. In reception there are half termly workshops based on a theme from the EYFS curriculum as well as additional sessions such as phonics.

### **Safeguarding**

We follow the school and LA guidelines on issues relating to safeguarding children (See Policy).

### **Special Needs**

The Foundation Stage has a fully inclusive ethos and values the Integrated Resource Unit. We follow the school and LA guidelines on issues relating to Special Needs (see policy).

### **Equal Opportunities**

Staff make every effort to ensure all children have equal access to the curriculum. Children are encouraged to value and enjoy contributions from different races and cultures and to respect differences and recognise similarities. We aim to develop tolerance and concern for others regardless of sex, race, needs, culture or class and to overcome sexist views.

(additional policies available on the school website)

### **Links with External Agencies**

Foundation Stage maintain links with a range of external agencies dependant on children's needs.

### **Behaviour**

Behaviour principles and policy are included in the school's behaviour policy (see behaviour policy). However, we would stress that our strategies are centered around positive reinforcement to support behaviour modification focusing on verbal PIE's (Post Incident Evaluations) which are heavily supported by visuals, and supporting emotional development through the Zones of Regulation and Positive Regard strategies.

Also see, Use of Reasonable Force to Control or Restrain Pupils Policy.

### **Transitions within the Foundation Stage**

#### **We aim to:**

- Enable all children to make a smooth and effective transition from Nursery to their Reception class, in order to maintain their confidence, self-image and positive attitude towards learning.
- Use the Sheffield EYFS transition record and other methods to facilitate smooth and effective transitions from and to other provisions as required.

## **Transition Procedures for Children Entering Nursery**

When a family contacts the nursery the Nursery Leader will invite parents/carers to come and visit the setting with their child. During their visit they will be given an application form. When the application form has been returned to school the Nursery Leader will contact the family and arrange a date to do a home visit. The home visit allows the staff to build a relationship with the family and their child in a setting where the child is most at ease and confident. This is also an opportunity for families to ask any questions and for staff to ask questions, provide families with more information and complete relevant paperwork. Following the home visit the children come to nursery on an accompanied visit. Depending on the success of the accompanied visit a start date is decided. Sometimes children will gradually build up the number of sessions they are attending if it is deemed necessary to support them in settling successfully. If children have previously been at other settings we will contact them to get the child's records and any assessments that have been made.

## **Transition Procedures into Reception Class**

Many of the children join Ash class at Wharnccliffe Side School from the nursery. Their transition procedure is different from that of the children entering other schools as we are able to directly involve them in joining their new class at regular intervals and to get to know the new staff within the familiar environment of the school.

Transition for children leaving Wharnccliffe Side Nursery to Wharnccliffe Side school:

- During the summer term nursery children will be invited into class for story sessions.
- A month prior to exiting nursery the nursery teacher and reception teacher will set up a transition timetable arranging short, regular visits into class over the coming weeks for small groups of nursery pupils.
- The reception teacher will visit the nursery pupils and make observations of them in the nursery in the final month before exiting nursery.
- There will be a transition meeting between the nursery and reception teachers to discuss pupils levels, progress, interests, needs etc
- The reception teacher will hold a new parents meeting to welcome parents to the school and discuss daily routine etc
- The reception teacher will hold a workshop for new parents and children to come into the classroom and take part in some art/craft activities and get to know both their new teacher and new surroundings.

Children that do not attend the Nursery and are due to start in the reception class are also invited in order to develop friendships with peers and join in the in-depth transition process. If they are unable to do this then the reception teacher will complete a home visit and parents will be invited to relevant meetings and workshops.

When the new school year begins the Reception intake will begin school on a part time basis for a set number of days (usually around 3 days) arranged by the Reception teacher and Headteacher. This is to ease the transition into school with smaller numbers in the class and shorter hours to build up as the children become settled. During this time there will also be the opportunity for parents to join their children for lunch in the dining room. This is to make the reception children more comfortable with their new eating arrangements and avoid any anxiety when they begin full days.

The transition into Wharnccliffe Side School for children in the Nursery Integrated Resource operates the same as for the mainstream children but they may have more visits.

How we support children moving on to other schools:

- The Nursery Leader contacts the reception teachers and invites them to come and meet the children in a Nursery session, providing an opportunity to discuss any special issues or concerns around individual children.
- Reception teachers are welcome to contact Nursery staff to discuss any issues arising.
- Links between local schools are supported throughout the year through networking meetings.
- Nursery makes a board with pictures and routines of school to help familiarise the children whilst still at nursery.
- With parental consent children's records are shared with the new setting.

## **Play In The Early Years**

### **Rationale**

Play is the young child's work. Through play, the child is able to learn through practical, hands-on meaningful experiences. Play allows children to make sense of the world encouraging them to explore and investigate in a unique and non-threatening way. It provides them with an opportunity to experience real-life situations – this is particularly important at a time when a lot of children's experiences are second hand through television, videos and electronic games. It supports all aspects of children's development.

We believe that through play children can learn at their own level and pace and can explore and experiment without fear of failure.

Children have choice and ownership over their actions and reactions and this provides concrete experiences, which provide the foundation for later more abstract thinking. We believe that careful planning is required if play and enquiry is to be of a high quality.

'Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge' (QCA/DfE, 2000, p.25).

### **Purposes/outcomes**

With an effective classroom environment we are able to provide opportunities for -

- A range of well-planned play opportunities which offer continuity and progression, e.g., physical play, creative play, imaginative play, social play, play with natural materials.
- A stimulating environment with easily accessible resources;
- Help children to become independent learners and to develop their creativity and imagination and to foster and develop characteristics of learning.
- Play contexts which are well planned and resources to allow access to the Foundation Stage curriculum and to foster all aspects of children's development (physical, emotional, social and intellectual);
- Situations which will enable children to appreciate the multicultural society in which they live and promote British values;
- Appropriate, good quality materials and resources which reflect careful planning, which enable children to interact at their own level of development, and allow for progression;
- Children to show consideration for others and to treat equipment with respect;
- Children to be in control of their own learning and derive pleasure from it;
- To encourage children to explore everyday situations in their play;
- To positively encourage all children to have equal access to all play experiences
- To challenge stereotyped ideas about play;



- Adults who understand the importance of play, for children, and develop the children's learning through play.
- Adults who respect and value children's play and are able to interact sensitively in it;
- Adults to have time to observe children at play and monitor their development in all areas of the curriculum to inform future planning of play provision.

## **Broad Guidelines**

Planning for play includes provision for different kinds of play – the following list of play situations and resources are readily accessible to the children.

- Imaginative play
- Small world play
- Construction and den play
- The living world
- Maths
- Design and technology
- Music, song and movement
- Book area (with puppets, story props etc.)
- Creative play – painting, malleable/tactile
- Investigative/games play
- Role play
- Writing area/mark marking
- Natural materials/sensory – e.g. sand, water
- Gross and fine motor
- Caring for the environment

All areas of provision are planned for and this planning is displayed in each area with a list of vocabulary and ideas of ways children can access that space both independently and with an adult. Each area of provision also had a CIP mat for children to communicate with if necessary.

- Resources within these areas are organised so that children can access them independently and take responsibility for tidying away.
- All resources are labelled with CIP pictures and photographs to make them accessible to all.
- Resources include bought, collected (e.g., recycled materials, shell) and improvised (old curtains to make dens or shawls) items.
- Planning of play experiences includes clear learning intentions linked to the areas of learning, topics being covered and knowledge of children's interests. Planning takes account of issues of space, time, provision of resources (including inclusion issues) and adult interactions.
- Children are encouraged to use materials creatively and imaginatively and to reflect on their play experiences.
- Adults take time to observe children at play in order to make valid assessments of learning and behaviour.
- Activities are planned in response to observations of the children – this enables adults to ensure progression in play.
- In Reception all activities also offer a 'Charlie Challenge' where children can choose to challenge themselves and complete a task to achieve a token.
- Adults interact sensitively with children to heighten the quality of experiences and build upon the children's interests. Men and women are encouraged to take part in all types of play to challenge stereotyped ideas about what is suitable for girls and boys.
- Adults regularly monitor, evaluate and develop the provision they make for play.



## **Admission Procedures**

There are 26 places available in each pre-school session in the Nursery, a following 5 places available in each toddler session for 2 year old provision, and 4 places in the Special Needs Integrated Resource. Nursery sessions are three hours and there are two on any given school day: 9:00am-12:00pm and 12:00pm-3:00pm.

Reception now have the capacity to offer 30 places per academic year.

## **The Process of Allocating Places**

Parents can request for their child to attend any of the nursery sessions throughout the week. These sessions are allocated according to parental wishes, child's need and availability. Parents place their child's name on a waiting list at any time from birth. Places are then offered on a strict first come, first served basis. Places are guaranteed from 4 weeks before the child's start date. Exceptions to this order may be made in cases of extreme need at the discretion of the Nursery Leader and Head teacher in accordance with LA guidelines. Looked After Children are at all times given priority. Parents will receive a letter offering them a place and giving dates for a home visit, accompanied visits and when they will start. This information is further discussed on the home visit. Our aim is for the children to start with the number of sessions we feel are appropriate. These are then increased in consultation with the parents.

When there are sufficient places in nursery sessions, parents can pay for additional sessions. These are managed on a termly basis so as to ensure that any family that approaches the nursery with a child eligible for Funded Early Learning, where possible, can take priority.

Attendance at the nursery does not influence the child's chance of obtaining a place in the reception class at Wharncliffe Side School.

## **Eligibility for Funded Early Learning**

Children from the age of 2-year-olds can get up to 30 hours free childcare where:

- Families are on certain benefits
- They are looked after by a local authority
- They have an Educational Health Care Plan
- They get Disability Living Allowance
- They have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or a child arrangements order
- Parents/partners in the household are in work or about to start a new job and earn over a certain amount (Parents who are newly self-employed and are in a "start-up period" do not need to meet the income criteria for 12 months.)

Children are eligible for the funding from the academic term after their second birthday. Dates are set out in the table below:

Children Born Between:	Can begin to access from:
1 <sup>st</sup> January – 31 <sup>st</sup> March	1 <sup>st</sup> April following the child's second birthday
1 <sup>st</sup> April – 31 <sup>st</sup> August	1 <sup>st</sup> September following the child's second birthday
1 <sup>st</sup> September – 31 <sup>st</sup> December	1 <sup>st</sup> January following the child's second birthday

### **Daily routines**

**Seedlings:** During a normal session there are set experiences that are offered for the children. They are able to choose whether they take part or not.

- Welcome time
- Snack (This is normally done as a group to support social interactions and communication development.)
- Group time (a fun and very short adult led activity focussed on either physical development, Stories for Talking, maths, phonics, creative development, Helicopter Stories or following the Language Enrichment Activity Programme).
- Music and Rhyme time
- Story

The children also have lots of time for free play both indoors and out within each session.

**Saplings:** During a normal session there is a set routine that we tend to follow. This is sometimes adapted on special days, such as, when we have a Forest School day or if we have any visitors in nursery.

- Welcome time-this includes our Makaton, number/shape and physical blast of the week
- Group time-A fun and short adult led learning activity often focussed around phonics, literacy (e.g. Helicopter Stories or Pie Corbett story telling), maths, communication and language development (e.g. Philosophy for Children), creative (e.g. Forest Schools, craft activities), physical development (e.g. Minikicks, Get Set for PE) and PSED development (e.g. SEAL activities, massage, mindfulness).
- Free flow indoors
- Snack (This is normally done as a group to support social interactions and communication development).
- Free flow outdoors
- Music and Rhyme time
- Story (This time also gives children the opportunity to share achievements, the nursery dragons that they take turns to have at home and their 'All About Me' books).

### **Daily routines in Reception (Ash)**

This is what a typical day in Reception looks like:

8.45-8.55	Arrival, children complete independent morning jobs and registration.
9.00-9.30	Phonics
9.30-10.00	Reading
10-10.45	Maths: whole class input then some targeted individual or small group focus activities whilst other children access provision
10.45-11.15	Snack time together having circle time discussions linked to RSHE scheme
	Outdoor play
11.15-12.00	English – handwriting followed by a carpet input then small group focus activities whilst other children access provision
12.15-1.15	Lunch
1.20-1.40	Assembly
1.40-2.40	Topic learning focussed on the wider curriculum areas of Expressive art and design and Understanding the World – there will be a whole class input then indoor/outdoor provision

	Thursdays – Forest Schools all afternoon
2.40-3.00	Story/singing time
3.15	Home time

### **Food and Drink**

Snacks:

Each day, milk and water are available. When a child turns 5, parents can pay for milk on a half termly basis. Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle into school, containing only water, to drink throughout the day.

We are part of the free fruit for schools program and as such each day fruit/vegetables are offered as snack.

Lunchtime:

Children may bring a packed lunch or take advantage of the free school meal programme and order either a hot or cold meal each day. Parents can do this via Reach More.

### **Healthy Early Years award**

Nursery has been accredited with the Healthy Early Years Award through encouraging healthy lifestyle choices. This is something the Nursery Leader prides herself on achieving each year by meeting all the relevant criteria.

Information on healthy lifestyles and family support with things such as brushing teeth and potty training are available in the nursery.

**Reviewed by:** Gemma Wellum

**Date of next review:** Autumn 2026