

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Spire Federation



Vision:

Our small school community welcomes everyone. We aim to achieve this by providing a challenging and supportive learning environment, where each one of us can flourish. With our foundation of Christian values, we strive for excellence in all that we do. We seek to empower our community to be excited about the future.

Empowering all to flourish and succeed.

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength." — Philippians 4:13

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range
- of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life;
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind;
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers; and
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from September 2021.

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year, which in The Spire Federation, is Reception (Foundation Stage 2).

All pupils work together in a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences provided both indoors and outdoors. These experiences enable children to become confident and independent learners.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

At The Spire Federation, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential, as outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage':

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

4. The Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning, to enable the children to achieve and (sometimes) exceed the Early Learning Goals.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

4.1 Planning

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
2. Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties; and
3. Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

At The Spire Federation, children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We create medium term plans based on a series of 'projects' developed in conjunction with Cornerstones each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning.

At the beginning of each project the children are encouraged to share their ideas for learning experiences and what they already know. These ideas and knowledge are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify

areas to focus on.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our weekly planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: 'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

5. Assessment

At The Spire Federation, on-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers also.

We record our observations in a variety of ways and every member of the EYFS team is encouraged to contribute.

Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute and this information is shared through regular conversations and comments parents add to Tapestry, to show us what their children are able to do at home. Ways to support children in their learning are shared weekly on Tapestry.

The on-going observations are used to inform the EYFS tracker that is shared with SLT during pupil progress meetings. The children's progress is reviewed continually. Throughout their

time in Reception, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects the on going observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

6. Working with parents

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child.

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways:

- Holding information evenings before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs at our Stay and Play sessions held in Summer Term;
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Valuing parents' contributions to learning journeys;
- Inviting parents into school for our 'See how we Learn' sessions
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing newsletters and curriculum planning overviews for each project, each term, highlighting how they can support their child at home;
- Inviting parents into school for 'parent phonics' workshops to demonstrate how we teach phonics and help them support their child;
- Welcoming parents as volunteers into our school;
- Providing parents with an end of year summary report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile.

We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking

them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

7. Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of 'Stay and Play' sessions to develop familiarity with the settings and practitioners. Our Reception staff also visit the local nurseries and preschools, to familiarise themselves with the children.

Parents/carers have the option to meet with Reception staff prior to their child starting school. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teachers meet with the Year 1 teachers to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data and books are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend time towards the end of the school year in the Year 1 classrooms to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with the environment and are 'Year 1 ready'.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at The Spire Federation. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety. In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose; and
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Term 1 starts with a mini 'Marvellous Me' project and the children learn:

- How and when it is necessary to wash their hands effectively;
- The need to flush the toilet after use;
- The importance of eating fruit and vegetables;
- The importance of drinking water;

In Term 4 during our project Dangerous Dinosaurs we promote good oral health and the importance of brushing your teeth.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for Tapestry observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

The Spire Federation has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role. EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders. There is a safeguarding team which includes a Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads. Staff have access to the 'CPOMS' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

8.1 Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, 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.

We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full 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/carers and outside agencies. We have a designated SENDCo in school who supports us with any additional needs a child may have.

9. Monitoring arrangements

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Lead is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Executive Headteacher every 3 years.

Date of Policy: December 2023

Due to be reviewed: December 2026

Approved by: Executive Headteacher