



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### Nurture Grow Succeed

#### **Introduction**

“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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.”

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Sandal Primary School, children can join our Nursery class the term after they turn 3 in September and a further intake if there are spaces in January. Children can join the Reception class (after a successful application) in the year that they turn five. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Sandal 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.

#### **Our Mission Statement**

"We are enthusiastic about providing a responsive and aspirational environment that challenges, encourages and inspires curiosity for all our children. We are committed to maintaining a caring, stimulating atmosphere that nurtures confidence, self-esteem, respect and independence to support early learning and development."

Our school is a place where everyone is treated equally, encouraged and respected. We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners, who are able to make their own decisions and reflect on their learning and actions. 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. It will be relevant and motivate young learners to set firm foundations for further learning and development as they move into each key stage. We use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs to help each child progress from their starting points, including those children with special educational needs. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and in a happy, caring and curious environment. We will work closely with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their child's learning. We all aim for our school to be a happy place where excellent behaviour is expected and all children enjoy their educational journey in early years.

#### **Rationale**

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and themes that we adhere to at Sandal Primary School. It is intended to promote consistency and high standards across the EYFS Foundation Stage. This document lays the foundations for the whole EYFS curriculum and considers other factors that will influence children's learning including parental involvement. It also outlines our strategies for safeguarding children in the EYFS and the expectations of transition from Nursery to Reception and Reception to Key Stage 1.

### **Aims**

The Early Years education we offer 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;
- It allows children to develop their curiosity and become inquisitive learners;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four principles:

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

### **A Unique Child-**

At Sandal Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise 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.

### **Inclusion/ Special Educational Needs (SEN)-**

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and believe that every child matters. All children are treated fairly as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All families are valued within our school. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school's Inclusion Manager is called upon for further information and advice. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the school's Inclusion Policy for SEN.

We set realistic but challenging expectations suitable to the needs of our children, so that all children have the opportunity to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation 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;
- Ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of all genders, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support 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 Sandal 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 to not only create a positive relationship for the child's first year at school, but for the child's journey through Sandal Primary.

### **Parents as Partners –**

We recognise and appreciate 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 in our Nursery or Reception at our open evenings and induction meetings.
- Arranging visits for children who are new to Sandal Primary School, by the teacher and family support worker in their home setting or childcare provision.
- Providing a handbook of information about commencing Nursery or Reception at Sandal Primary.
- Children are invited to spend time in the Reception Class for induction visits before starting school. The children's visits are then discussed with parents.
- Providing 'Welcome to Nursery or Reception' meetings for Nursery and Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Holding a 'settling in day' day early in the academic year, for any parents/ carers who want to discuss how their child is settling into the school environment and to answer any questions/ concerns they may have.
- 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.
- Using an online programme called Tapestry, to record children's individual learning and share 'WOW moment's between home and school. Parents/ carers are able to access this

at any time, adding their contributions but also acts as a communication platform for any messages or memos to be passed on.

- Publishing a topic information sheet detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of each half-term.
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics, reading or maths.
- Offering two parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed and a copy of their current attainment and achievements in each area of learning is given to parents.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Reception. In addition to this, a short report based on the child's Characteristics of Learning will be written during the Spring term.
- 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 achievement assemblies, class assemblies, workshops, Christmas and Easter craft sessions, Christmas productions and sports day etc. (Nursery parents where applicable)
- 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, talking about their jobs to link with topics.
- Encouraging parents to come into school to read to their child's class in Reception (Nursery parents will have this opportunity during the summer term).

#### **Staff-**

Nursery- 1 class teacher, 1 nursery nurse and an additional adult which is currently an Early Years apprentice.

Reception - 2 classes, 3 class teachers, 2 teaching assistants and an Early Years apprentice.

In addition to this, specifically appointed staff to support children with additional needs where appropriate.

All staff in the Foundation Stage are passionate about developing good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them in any situation. This is a vital role that all staff must adhere to in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

#### **Enabling Environments-**

At Sandal Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We aim to create a stimulating and attractive natural environment where all children have the opportunity to develop their curiosity. We want our children to 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. Areas are also enhanced on a weekly or fortnightly basis to promote current learning objectives and is often linked to the topic or theme to keep the children motivated and allows them to progress in their learning independently. 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.

From the spring term in Reception, children have the opportunity to complete weekly challenges which are linked to the weekly objectives. This allows the children to take charge of their own learning and to increase the desire to choose to learn independently.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning, both following children’s interests and through a carefully planned curriculum. Effective planning is informed by observations and assessments in a personalised learning journey and through the work completed in English and Maths books. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned objective led provision provided by staff. Staff will then enhance play and extend as needed to further develop individual learning.

### **Learning and Developing**

“Ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and give children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life”.’

(Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2021)

Teachers and early years practitioners in the Foundation Stage, plan opportunities and teach sessions to meet the expectations of the EYFS curriculum. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in an early years setting. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. 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 skills across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child- initiated activities in order for us to strive for all 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

These three areas are a huge focus during the Nursery year as they form the building blocks to learning and progressing in the Specific areas. Staff will also support children in the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The four Specific Areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of 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 move forward to support the child’s development. This may also include a discussion with the SENCO to assess any Special Education Needs support.

### **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which reflect the different ways children learn:

### **Playing and exploring –**

Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. 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 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. 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 –**

Children will have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Children will be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults will support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children will access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances.

## **At Sandal Primary School:**

### **Planning**

At Sandal Primary, teachers in the Foundation Stage, use Development Matters as a supporting document to plan weekly and daily lesson objectives from. This enables staff to build the children's knowledge and experiences in preparation for the end of the Reception year, where the children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals from the EYFS Statutory Framework (2021).

Our medium-term planning is topic led which acts as a 'hook for learning' and identifies the specific learning outcomes expected each week, in each area of learning. This also includes RE, Computing and Music. Planning is always flexible so that teachers are able to respond to the needs of the children in each cohort.

### **Observations**

Foundation Stage staff use incidental observations as the basis for assessing the children's progress and learning and to identify next steps in teaching. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations are then recorded in the children's online learning journey for parents to view. Observations are only recorded when a child has shown evidence of new learning; they should not be exhaustive. All staff who work in Nursery and Reception are expected to contribute to the children's learning journeys using observations.

### **Assessment**

During the first term in Nursery and Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline test. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. In addition, in

Reception, children have to complete the governments Reception Baseline test within the first 6 weeks. The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging or Expected at the end of the Reception year. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

The teacher regularly updates each child's progress on Sandal's assessment tool, highlighting their achievements in each area of learning. This is usually done formally 3 times a year. This enables teachers to identify who is 'on track' and who is 'not on track' for the time of year. It provides a summary for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We also share this information at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning.

### **The Learning Environment**

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Sandal Primary have adopted a 'curiosity approach'. Curiosity cannot be taught but can be illuminated and nurtured. It is frequently the engine that drives learning and achievement. This approach aims to bring awe and wonder into early childhood and creates 'thinkers and doers' of the future. Part of this is making sure, that as a practitioner, you are empowered to create meaningful and mindful spaces and to put the child at the centre of every activity.

Staff in our Foundation Stage have created an open-ended environment, with a natural and calming look and feel.

Learning environments are monitored by the EYFS Leader on a regular basis to ensure that children are being offered progressive experiences throughout the Foundation Stage. Displays in the environment are to reflect the children's achievements and celebrate their learning.

### **Welfare and Safety**

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, expectations, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop important life skills. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

At Sandal, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children;

- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose;
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable developmental experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Safeguarding**

We adhere to the rules in our Safeguarding Policy and its purpose is to set a clear framework for our responsibilities and legal duties in relation to each child's welfare. We aim to ensure a reliable and effective response in the event of any concern for a child's welfare, and to support each child and each family. We strive to put children's needs first at all times. We want to encourage children to be confident and assertive and develop trusting and respectful relationships with the children in our care. We want our children to know they will be listened to and believed in any circumstance.

### **Good Health**

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle into school each day. Regular handwashing routines are conducted throughout the day to ensure good hygiene is practised.

### **Intimate Care**

"Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene so staff working in early years need to be prepared to assist children when needed. However, in the case of a child needing a high level of intimate care, it is good practice for the school to inform the school nurse. The child's class teacher and the EYFS leader/ SENCO will also assist to create an individual care plan for the child so that staff involved know what care is needed and when.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.



## **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 every child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

## **Starting Nursery-**

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 Nursery curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to go through the:

- Nursery handbook
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform
- Introduce a 'typical day in the life of a nursery child'

They will spend a morning in their new class. Parents can stay with their child during this session. This means that before they join their new class the nursery environment is already a familiar place to them. The Nursery teacher and Nursery nurse will then arrange home visits during the first week in September in order to see the children in their home environment, one that is familiar to the children so they feel safe and secure. Children are then phased into Nursery each day during the first week in September. Arrangements can be made with the class teacher, for children who are finding it difficult to settle into Nursery. Each case will be treated differently and adapted to suit the needs of the child.

## **Starting Reception –**

Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an induction meeting late in the spring term to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- To go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag if requested
- Introduce a 'typical day in the life of a reception child'

Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend two mornings in their new class during the summer term. Parents can leave their child during this session. This means that before they join their new class, the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them. Arrangements are also made for the children's new class teacher to visit them in their current nursery setting. Home visits will also be offered to parents/ carers and these are conducted by the class teacher and the family support worker. During the first week in September, the new to Sandal children will have one day in school before the whole class attends on the second day. This allows the children to establish new friendships in a smaller group before the full class attends. The Reception children are assigned a Year 5 buddy to help them at lunchtime during their first few weeks at school. They will have several opportunities throughout the year to spend time with their buddy too.

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

**Starting Year 1-** Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend two mornings in their new class during the summer term. Teachers in Reception will spend one lesson each week in the year 1 classrooms during the summer term so that the children become familiar with the learning environments and teaching styles in year 1.

Throughout all the transition processes, if there is a child or children who are finding it difficult to adapt to change, we will always try to accommodate their individual needs and offer extra transition sessions where necessary.

### **Links with other policies**

Teaching and Learning Policy  
Curriculum Policy  
PSHE Policy  
Assessment Policy  
Health and Safety Policy  
Medical Policy  
EYFS Health and Safety Policy

### **Monitoring and Review**

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher and EYFS Leader will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. The Curriculum Committee of The Governing Body will also be part of this process. Reviewing this policy will be the responsibility of the EYFS Leader.

Date policy written: January 2023

Date approved by the School Standards Committee:

Date to be reviewed: January 2024