**Early Years Policy**

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**Shaw Ridge Primary School**

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| **Approved by:** | [Name] | **Date:** [Date] |
| **Last reviewed on:** | [Date] |
| **Next review due by:** | [Date] |

Introduction

At Shaw Ridge Primary School, we are committed to providing a high quality early years’ education which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning.

We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework that clearly states:

**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.’**

When parents and carers choose Shaw Ridge we want them to be confident that we will keep their children safe and help them to thrive.

**Aims**

Our Foundation Stage Unit aims to:

• Create a happy, caring, secure and fun environment for all children.

• Encourage confidence, independence and a desire to learn.

• Focus on the development of every child as an individual, valuing and building

on their previous experiences and responding to their individual needs.

• Work in partnership with parents and carers.

• Develop in children an enquiring mind, an interest in learning and an

enthusiasm for the next stage of school life.

• Provide good foundations for later learning.

• Encourage good social relationships, developing self-esteem and respect for

others.

**The Four EYFS Principles**

• A Unique Child

• Positive Relationships

• Enabling Environments

• Learning and Development

**A Unique Child:**

At Shaw Ridge 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 d is positions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing circle times and reward stickers, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

We believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and to fulfil their potential. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

 In F2 we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children 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 to learn effectively.

• Providing 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 for children whose ability and understanding

are in advance of their language and communication skills.

• Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as

necessary.

It is important to us that all children 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. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

**Positive Relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. Parents and carers are the children’s first educators and we are committed to working in close partnership with them in order to enable each child to achieve his/her potential. We highly value the contribution that parents and carers make and seek to maintain an effective partnership between home and school by:

• Demonstrating that we value and respect the role of the parents/carers as

the first educators by listening to accounts of their child’s development and

any concerns and aspirations they have.

• Ensuring that parents and carers are provided with detailed information prior

to admissions enabling them to feel confident about the transition process.

• Ensuring arrangements for settling in are flexible enough to give time for

children to become secure and for practitioners and parents to discuss

children’s circumstances, interests, skills and needs.

• Demonstrating that we value linguistic diversity and provide opportunities

for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning.

• Welcoming parents and carers into the classroom to support and enrich the

learning opportunities provided.

• Ensuring parents and carers are kept well informed about the curriculum and

school life.

• Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child’s progress

and allowing access to their children’s “Learning Journey” record books.

• Providing space in the child’s” Learning Journey” for parents to leave

comments relating to the children’s achievements.

• Sharing information regarding a child’s progress and achievements and how

parents and carers can support the next stage of learning.

All staff involved with F2 aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

**Enabling Environments**

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning. The F2 learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and to rest. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. It has its own outdoor breakout space. This has a positive effect on the children’s development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

**Learning and Development**

We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Our policy on learning and teaching defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. We aim to encourage all children to become “Collaborative Sharers”,” Independent Thinkers”, “Creative Explorers” and “Spiritual “Reflectors” to enable them to deepen their learning. Features that relate to the F2 are:

• The partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure

at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.

• The understanding that staff have of how children develop and learn, and how

this affects their teaching.

• The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear

explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and

talk or other means of communication.

• The carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early

Learning Goals throughout F2.

• The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend

their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional

abilities.

• The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning,

and to develop independence and self-management.

• The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor

space, facilities and equipment.

• The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children

through observations.

In addition, EYFS emphasises three Characteristics of Effective Learning, which underpin “learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.” These characteristics are the ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment, playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.

Playing and Exploring

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.”

Active Learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have 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.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.”

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and can help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

**The Early Years Curriculum**

The Early Learning Goals are the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage.

They are organised into three PRIME areas of Learning and Development:

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

The children will be provided with experiences and support, which will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; respect for others; social skills; and a positive disposition to learn. As Shaw Ridge is a healthy school we provide opportunities to support children’s emotional well-being, helping them to know themselves and what they can do is a high priority. This is particularly important in the first term at school.

**Communication and Language**

This area of learning includes communication, speaking, listening and understanding in different situations and for different purposes. The development and use of communication and language is at the heart of young children’s learning and opportunities will be provided for children to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes, and be supported in developing the confidence and disposition to do so.

**Physical Development**

This area of learning is about improving skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. Physical development also importantly helps children gain confidence in what they can do and enables them to feel the positive effects of being healthy and active. Young children’s physical development is inseparable from all other aspects of development because they learn through being active and interactive. They use all their senses to learn about the world around them and make connections between new information and what they already know.

And four SPECIFIC areas of Learning and Development:

**Literacy**

The children will be supported in early reading and writing skills through daily discrete phonics teaching. They will be introduced to a wide range of books, reading simple texts and writing for a variety of purposes. We will endeavour to promote a love of reading and writing through providing an environment rich in print and many possibilities for writing and communication.

**Mathematics**

The children will be supported in developing their understanding of number and shape space and measures in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. This area of learning includes counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections, recognising relationships and working with numbers, shapes, space and measures. Experiencing concepts in a practical context and linking experiences to everyday life is crucial in the early stages of development. The children will be provided with opportunities to practice and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence and competence in their use.

**Understanding the World**

In this area of learning, children are developing the crucial knowledge, skills and understanding that help them to make sense of the world. This forms the foundation for later work in science, design and technology, history, geography and information and communication technology. Their learning will be supported through offering opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely; encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real-life situations; undertake practical ‘experiments’; and work with a range of materials.

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Creativity is fundamental to successful learning. Being creative enables children to make connections between one area of learning and another and so extend their understanding. They will be provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings, for example, through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities, mathematics, and design and technology.

None of these areas of learning and development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to early years’ development. All the areas will be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

The statutory Early Learning Goals (ELG’s) outline the expected levels that most children will reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. Some children may exceed these goals whereas others, depending on their individual needs, may be emerging in some or all of the goals – particularly some younger children, some children with learning difficulties and disabilities and some learning English as an additional language.

**Learning Through Play**

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, provides key opportunities for young children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. We recognise the importance of the adult support and secure environment in the role of effective play. Effective play opportunities involve:

• Planning and resourcing a challenging environment.

• Supporting children’s learning through planned play activity.

• Extending and supporting children’s spontaneous play.

• Extending and developing children’s language and communication in their play.

The secure environment and adult support in play enables children to:

• Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them to make

sense of the world.

• Practice and build up ideas, concepts and skills.

• Be alone, be alongside others or cooperate as they talk or rehearse their

feelings.

• Take risks, make and learn from mistakes.

• Think creatively and imaginatively.

• Communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.

• Express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe

environments.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning. Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

**Planning**

The planning within F2 is based around children’s needs and interests. Long term plans reflect the skills and knowledge we intend to cover over the whole year. Medium and short term plans are developed by the Foundation Stage team using knowledge gathered from observations which reflect the children’s ideas and interests. These could change at short notice to reflect these needs and interests.

Through careful planning we aim to:

• Provide a carefully structured curriculum, building on and extending children’s

knowledge, experiences interests and skills.

• Provide a wide range of well planned, purposeful, challenging activities that

utilise the children’s interests and previous knowledge.

• Support and develop children’s involvement and concentration in order for

them to learn effectively.

• Present activities in many ways and use a range of teaching strategies.

• Develop self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn.

• Provide a safe and secure learning environment, where each child is valued and

where racial, religious and gender stereotypes are challenged.

• Monitor children’s progress, identifying areas of concern and taking action to

provide support.

• Give opportunities for self-assessment and reflection.

**Assessment and Recording**

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. We make regular assessments of children’s learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in F2 takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children’s individual ‘Learning Journey’ books and additional evidence books. They also contain information provided by parents and carers and other settings.

Staff ensure that they:

• Make systematic observations and assessments of each child’s achievements,

interests and characteristics of effective learning.

• Use these observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and

plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child.

• Match their observations to the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.

We use the Early Learning Goals to assess the children in the Foundation Stage. These goals were developed to measure progress. They help staff plot the individual progress of each child as they grow and develop. As the child progresses through F2 the staff will make judgements based on their observations of the child in all six areas of learning. Throughout the year the children will be working towards the 17 early learning goals in The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile which records these outcomes and is used to inform parents and Year One teachers of the levels achieved. The data is also submitted to the DFE for analysis.

During the year there are formal opportunities to feedback information to parents and carers through parent/carer consultations in the Autumn and Spring Terms. There is also the opportunity for parents and carers to discuss their child’s needs and interests with the class teacher during the induction period before they start school. We value parents and carers as vital partners in the assessment process.

At the end of the academic year a written report covering the 7 areas of learning and the child’s “characteristics of effective learning” will be given to parents and carers. Discussions can be, and are, also arranged independently, if felt appropriate by either parents/carers or the class teacher.

**Welfare Arrangements**

At Shaw Ridge, we recognise our responsibility for promoting the welfare of our youngest children.

• All adults with access to our children are DBS checked. No adult is allowed

to be with the children if this has not been done. Furthermore, as part of the

induction process they will have discussed and signed a school code of

conduct.

• All staff employed by the school will undertake regular Child Protection

training and are expected to follow the school guidance in following up a cause

for concerns

• Staffing will be organised to ensure the safety of the children.

• All staff will be trained to the level appropriate to responsibility.

• First aid will only be administered by trained personnel. Procedures are in

place to inform parents/carers of accidents involving their child.

• Procedures are in place to ensure security of children and the safe release of

children into the care of individuals named by the parent/carer.

• As a healthy school, there is a focus on emotional wellbeing, healthy eating

and physical activity. Good health will be promoted and appropriate action will

be taken when children are ill.

• Routines are in place to support children’s growing understanding of personal

hygiene.

• Children’s behaviour is managed effectively through the use of a whole school

system, which is adapted to the stage and development of individual needs.

• Risk assessments will be undertaken and reviewed regularly.

• Premises, furniture and equipment will be regularly checked and repaired,

washed etc. as required.

• Records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management

of the setting will be maintained.

• Policy documents will be available for parents and carers as requested

**Admission Arrangements**

At Shaw Ridge we have an admission limit of 60 pupils. Children are admitted into F2 in the September following their fourth birthday and after a short 2-week induction period in September they attend full time.

Typically, children join us from over 15 different pre-school settings so our first priority is to settle them and encourage development social skills and friendship groupings. As they approach transition into Year One the children will be allocated into two separate classes. This enables us to take account of factors such as friendship groups and individual learning needs when compiling the classes.

Our admissions procedure for Early Years follows Swindon Borough Council’s School Admission Policy, a detailed copy of which can be obtained from our school office or online.

In summary, when more applications for F2 are received than there are places available, the criteria for allocating places is implemented in the following order (as Stated in Swindon Borough Council’s Admission Handbook):

A child who has a statement of special educational needs is required to be admitted to the school named on the child’s statement.

**A:** A child in the care of a LA or provided with accommodation by that authority as defined by Section 22 of the Children Act 1989.

**B:** Any child who has a sibling attending the preferred school at the same time as he or she is due to be admitted.

**C:** Any child living within the school’s catchment area.

**D:** Any child not living in the school’s catchment area.

In all cases where schools are oversubscribed, distance measured as a straight-line from the centre point of the rooftop of the home address to the centre point of the rooftop of the school will be used to prioritise applications within individual oversubscription criteria. If the direct distance measurement does not separate applicants, places will be offered by random allocation. The random process will be repeated and any previous random order will be discarded.

Places in our F2 classes must be applied for directly with SBC and NOT school. The deadline is clearly stated each year in the Admissions Handbook.

**Senior Member of Staff Responsible:** Sally Cowell (Headteacher)

**Designated Member of Staff:** Lynda Olner (Foundation Stage Phase Leader)

**Governor Responsible:** Julia Hinns

**Policy Agreed School Improvement Committee:** 7 May 2019