



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Together We Succeed

Rationale

'All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.'

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk). Jan 2024

At Shelley First School, we aim to provide an environment where all children feel safe and happy to allow for personal, emotional physical and intellectual development to be promoted and supported. Our community is built upon the following values of 'Share, Help, Encourage, Love, Learning, Everyone Matters, You Can'. At Shelley First School, these values begin in our Reception class and the children grow and flourish from our outstanding early years provision with strong foundations and good self-assurance.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets out four guiding principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** and benefit from **strong partnerships** between practitioners and parents/carers
- **Learning and development is important** as children learn and develop at different rates

This policy explains how practice at Shelley First School is underpinned by these four themes. It reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010 and refers to the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

Every child is a unique child

At Shelley First School, our aim is to provide a happy, secure environment in which children will thrive and develop spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically, in their own unique way. This journey begins in Reception, in our Early Years Foundation Stage and at this stage, and throughout school, the curriculum equips our children for life. We recognise that every child is a competent learner and that children develop in individual ways and at differing rates. We use praise and encouragement throughout the day as well as recognition and reward through house points and achievement assemblies to develop the children's love of learning and to support the acquisition of all our Shelley Values and 'Together we Succeed' ethos.

Inclusion

Staff are ambitious for all children, whatever their starting point. We work closely and quickly with parents and carers if we are worried about progress and put in place additional support, where it is needed. At Shelley First School, we recognise that children learn by leading their own play and also taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults. We recognise that this is different for every child, but through play, active learning and creating and thinking critically, all our children build confidence, learn to explore, relate to others and set goals and solve problems.

We value the diversity of individuals within our school. All children at Shelley First School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. Everyone is valued at Shelley First School, because 'Together we Succeed'.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children; we plan in order to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. For more detail, see our Equality Policy, our Equalities Statement and our SEND policy.

Safeguarding and welfare

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure, when their individual needs are met and they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them'.

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk) Jan 2024

Schools are not required to have separate policies to cover EYFS requirements provided that the requirements are already met through an existing policy. The Shelley First Safeguarding policy complies with EYFS requirements.

In everything we do at Shelley First School, we safeguard all children and ensure suitability of all adults, we promote good health, support and understand behaviours and maintain records, policies and procedures in line with guidance. **The school ensures that all EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements are implemented in line with the most current statutory framework.**

At Shelley First School, we promote the welfare of children and take appropriate action when children are ill. We provide fruit as a snack every day and children are given milk. When they turn 5, this can be chosen and paid for by parents/carers. Children have access to water at all times and are encouraged to stay hydrated, with healthy eating and oral hygiene woven into our curriculum. **We support parents to understand the impact of screen time and the importance of managing this.**

We manage behaviour effectively, in a manner appropriate to the children's stages of development and individual needs, re-enforcing our Shelley Values and 'Shelley Best' rules, and we ensure that premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable.

We recognise that some children at Shelley First School will be at different stages of development and may need support with 'intimate care'. 'Intimate care' is any assistance that involves touching a child while carrying out a procedure that most children are able to do for themselves, but some are unable to manage without help. This may include

- Dressing and undressing (including underwear)
- Helping someone use a toilet
- Cleaning / wiping / washing intimate parts of the body
- Application of medical treatment, other than to arms, face and legs below the knee

All children have the right to be safe and to be treated with dignity and respect. Staff involved with intimate care of pupils will be sensitive to individual needs and will follow the Intimate Care Policy.

Positive relationships

Children learn best when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them and at Shelley First School, we believe that these positive relationships encourage resilience, independence, teach respect, and help to develop a sense of self-assurance in our children. At Shelley First, we respond to children's individual needs and interests and help them to build their learning over time, through these positive relationships.

Working in partnership with parents and carers

Our positive relationships start with our parents and we recognise that as parents, you know your children best. We offer a welcome meeting before the start of the Reception year where we talk to parents about their child and their needs. We offer children and parents the chance to come into school before starting and enjoy stay and play sessions, where we can get to know you, and your child. We operate an open-door policy and teachers welcome children at the gate in the mornings and see them out in the afternoons, giving you the opportunity to see the teacher directly if you need to.

We share regular progress with parents and discuss any barriers to learning in a timely and effective way, sharing ways that parents could support their child's learning at home. We issue reports twice a year and hold two parents' evenings throughout the year. We update you on your child's attendance every half term and facilitate a number of opportunities to welcome you into school which include family story time, celebration events, Christmas performances, Creative Week, Summer Serenade and Summer Sharing, to name but a few events. We also share phonics teaching and videos to support you to support your child at home.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them and extend their vocabulary in all situations. We have very strong links with various feeder pre-schools and childminders, including The Cabin, which is situated in Shelley First's grounds. The Foundation Stage staff meet with providers or offer a home visit to discuss each individual child and their transition process into school, before their September start date.

Transition

We recognise that starting school for young children can be a difficult time, and we recognise that it can be daunting for parents too. We take great effort to plan smooth transitions for you and your child so that they settle into their new class and Shelley First School quickly and happily. Many children will already attend The Cabin and will be familiar with the school and the grounds. All children, will be given the opportunity to attend two half-day sessions before beginning. One will be with parents, and the other without. Parents are also invited to attend a welcome meeting in the summer term and before these visits, where they will be able to meet the Reception teacher and other key staff. At these sessions, we will provide information about school expectations, the seven areas of learning, provide uniform and PE kit details and offer information about school dinners and free school meals. During the first week of school in September, the children will be invited, in two

groups, to attend a morning session and an afternoon session, before beginning full time in the second week. During the first weeks in school, the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) will be undertaken.

Enabling environments

'The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe behaviours children use in order to learn. To learn well, children must approach opportunities with curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. Effective learning must be meaningful to a child, so that they are able to use what they have learned and apply it in new situations. These abilities and attitudes of strong learners will support them to learn well and make good progress in all the Areas of Learning and Development.' *Overview – Characteristics of Effective Learning, and Areas of Learning and Development – Birth To 5 Matters*

Birth to 5 Matters is published by Early Education on behalf of the Early Years Coalition.

Here at Shelley First School, we ensure our environment for learning is matched to the characteristics of effective learning (CEL) and we use these characteristics to observe and assess children and make sure that their learning is not just academic, but that our children also develop socially, culturally, morally and spiritually.

We do this through recognising the importance of playing and active learning, where children learn at their highest level. We nurture play with peers and we make sure that the wide variety of play opportunities within the learning environment reflect their wide-ranging interests. We ensure that the environment encourages active learning, providing physical and mental challenges through continuous provision tasks and using a wide range of resources.

The Reception classroom is a spacious area specifically designed to allow children to explore, learn and discover. Resources are well organised and clearly labelled so that children are constantly developing their language and vocabulary and can be independent with their organisation. There are areas designed for children to be active, and areas for children to be quiet, or creative, or to reflect. The classroom opens out in to its own Reception play area, allowing children to experience the different opportunity that outdoor learning and development can offer. Outdoors, children can use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. This is further supported with access to Forest School activities and the wider playground and grounds which have a reflection area, composting, woodland areas and shelters.

At Shelley First a typical day includes a balance of adult-led learning, child-initiated play, and opportunities for both indoor and outdoor exploration. Children take part in daily phonics, writing and maths sessions, alongside small-group activities that develop key skills across the curriculum, allowing careful progression and ample

opportunities for high-quality talk, handwriting, oral rehearsal, phonological awareness and language development

Throughout the day, routines such as registration, snack times, lunch, assemblies and story sessions help provide structure and support independence. Children also enjoy a range of enriching experiences, including creative activities, physical education, Forest School and learning about the world around them.

The Importance of Learning and Development

Our Reception curriculum ensures children develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours required for a successful transition into Year 1. This includes communication and language, self-regulation, independence, early literacy, mathematics, physical development and positive learning behaviours.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2024) sets out the seven areas of learning and development that are taught and at Shelley First School, we recognise that these are all important and inter-connected. There are three prime areas:

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

There are a further four specific areas which help strengthen and develop the prime areas listed above and ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm:

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

At Shelley First School, we deliver these in a variety of ways:

Communication and language

At Shelley First School, we recognise the importance of children's spoken language and understand that it underpins all seven areas of the Early Learning Areas of Development. Our last Ofsted inspection (2023), recognised this:

'The curriculum and its delivery in early years is exceptional. What is striking is the way in which pupils' vocabulary is extended. Leaders take care to model and teach what words and concepts children should learn to help them build their knowledge into Year 1. Leaders' plans start from Reception Year, with a focus on learning to read, write and build their vocabulary' Shelley First School Ofsted Report 2023.

We recognise that Reception is a crucial year for securing the foundational skills that underpin future success, including communication and language, self-regulation, executive function, early reading, writing and mathematics

We prioritise quality back and forth interactions between adults and children and amongst peers. The number and quality of conversations throughout the day are crucial and at Shelley First we endeavour to make them language rich, and vocabulary building. **Key vocabulary is carefully identified, planned and revisited to ensure children build and retain a broad and ambitious vocabulary over time.**

- Children read and are read to frequently and they are engaged actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems.
- We provide our children with extensive opportunities through circle time, topic-based activities, exploring the world, through continuous provision and show and tell to embed new words in a range of contexts - through this the children thrive. They have the strongest of foundations on which to build as they enter KS1 and beyond.
- Through conversation, story-telling and role play, we encourage children to share their ideas, sensitively question, become comfortable with elaborating and as a result they develop a range of vocabulary and language structures.

Physical Development

At Shelley First School, we use our extensive grounds and excellent sporting expertise and partners to ensure physical development is a high priority for all children. Physical activity is vital for all-round development and is fundamental to happy and healthy children.

We ensure a wide variety of games and opportunities that support children to develop both their gross and fine motor skills, helping them with core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility and then also with their fine motor skills to help with hand-eye coordination. This is strongly linked to early literacy.

We ensure there are repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools. With careful feedback from adults, children develop their proficiency, control and confidence.

We facilitate balance bike sessions and pedal bike sessions without stabilisers to support the children's development, confidence and motor skills and they enjoy externally led Project Sport sessions, as well as P.E sessions and forest school sessions.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development is crucial for a healthy, happy life and cognitive development. At Shelley First School, with our Shelley Ethos of 'Share, Help, Encourage, Love, Learning, Everyone, You Can!' children are supported to manage their emotions and develop a positive sense of self and all staff develop strong, warm and supportive relationships with the children to enable them to understand how they, and others, are feeling.

We use our values and explicit teaching of these to help children set simple goals, to have confidence in what they can do, to persist and wait for what they want, and to direct their attention to what is necessary.

Through reading, stories and themed learning, we teach children to look after their bodies, including healthy eating and to manage their personal needs independently.

The Shelley ethos of 'Together we Succeed' is taught from day one to encourage teamwork and used to support interactions. Children at Shelley First learn how to make good friendships, cooperate with each other and resolve conflicts.

Furthermore, we explicitly support the development of executive function and self-regulation skills, including attention control, working memory, flexible thinking, perseverance and problem-solving and this is woven into our curriculum and the children's provision experience.

Literacy

Shelley First is a reading school and we believe in fostering a life-long love of reading in children. Reading consists of two dimensions and we nurture both:

Language comprehension develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books, rhymes, poems and songs they read and learn together. We do this through story times, music sessions, independent access to books and musical instruments through provision etc.

Skilled word reading is taught through the Read Write Inc Scheme, a well-recognised and highly successful systematic, synthetic phonics scheme (see our phonics policy). This teaches decoding and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words.

We teach early reading in small, tailored groups and children bring home books that match the sounds they have learned in class.

In line with the DfE Writing Framework (2025), we recognise that writing is a complex process. In Reception, children develop strong foundations through oral language, storytelling, mark-making, letter formation/handwriting, spelling and sentence construction. We prioritise quality over quantity and ensure that children secure the foundational skills of transcription before expecting sustained independent writing. This is done through whole class work, small group work, continuous provision and explicit, engaging teaching: school explicitly teaches handwriting, spelling and sentence construction. Children are encouraged to orally rehearse sentences, retell stories, explain ideas and discuss vocabulary before recording their thoughts through writing. Teaching focuses on helping children understand how spoken sentences can be represented in writing through carefully modelled shared and guided writing experiences.

Mathematics

At Shelley First School, we understand that developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.

We teach through a maths mastery approach, which provides frequent and varied opportunities to apply understanding through the use of manipulatives.

Supported by activities within the continuous provision, we provide plenty of opportunities for children to develop across all areas of mathematics, including in their shape, space and measure. Activities both inside and outside encourage children to spot patterns and connections, and our rich back and forth language encourage children to talk about what they notice.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. At Shelley First School, we ensure there is a good frequency and range of personal experiences which encourage and allow the children to see and understand the world around them.

We welcome important members of society to school, such as police officers, nurses and firefighters and children enjoy listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems which foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

Assemblies throughout the week, build children's understanding of their wider world and the many people and creatures who live in it and trips are carefully planned to support the children's understanding of the world.

Learning topics are carefully crafted to further support this and layer into later learning in school, ensuring that our Reception children have all the right foundations and building blocks to make those important connections as they develop.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity and self-expression. At Shelley First, children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. Opportunities take place inside and outside and children enjoy enrichment weeks where art and design sit at the heart of the learning and development.

Monitoring and Assessment

Ongoing assessment of where each individual child is at with their learning and development is undertaken throughout the year, on an ongoing basis. Staff understand the children's interests and what they know they can do and they shape the teaching and learning experiences for each child, reflecting that knowledge.

Assessment is based primarily on practitioners' knowledge of children gained through daily interactions, observations and learning experiences rather than extensive collections of evidence.

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is taken at the start of the Reception year, and at the end of the Reception Year, an Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFS profile) is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities and each level of development is assessed against the early learning goals, where children will be assessed as 'meeting' expected levels of development or 'emerging', if they are not reaching the expected level.

This profile is used to support the transition between Reception and Year 1 and is shared with parents and carers. Adjustments to the assessment process may be made for children with SEND, where appropriate.

This policy considers the following documents:

[The writing framework](#)

[EEF | Self-regulation and executive function](#)

[EEF | Early literacy](#)

[Strong foundations in the first years of school - GOV.UK](#)

[Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#)

[Development Matters - GOV.UK](#)

[Birth-to-5-Matters-Doc-LINKS.pdf](#)