



Sidcot
Live Adventurously

Policy Name: Curriculum policy EYFS including Assessment and Reporting

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1. Introduction

This policy reflects the statutory requirements of the EYFS Framework (latest version), including safeguarding, assessment, welfare and learning and development requirements.

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.

The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS is about what children learn, as well as how they learn. Effective practice is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other and through adult-guided learning.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.
- Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years. These are:

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
 - Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.18). The framework covers the education and care of all children, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework

2. Observation, Assessment and Planning

Children start to learn about the world around them from the moment they are born. The care and education offered by our Early Years department helps children to continue to learn by providing interesting learning opportunities which are appropriate for their age and stage of development.

The unique child is central to our curriculum. We observe the children's development and learning; assess their progress and plan for next steps. We support each child to form positive relationships with their key person, who responds to their needs in a sensitive and consistent way. We provide an environment in which the child can participate in rich learning opportunities through play and adult interactions which enhance this play. These three elements together ensure optimum opportunities for learning and development.

We aim to ensure that the three Characteristics of Effective Learning; playing and exploring, active learning and creating, and thinking critically are embedded into our practice. We encourage every child to enjoy their achievements and develop their own ideas. We seek to encourage children's natural curiosity by providing plenty of opportunities to investigate and explore both the inside and outside environment. We encourage our children to 'have a go' and try new things and to persevere to a satisfying conclusion.

Play helps young children to learn and develop through doing and talking, which research has shown to be the means by which young children learn to think. Through 'In the Moment Planning' (ITMP), the majority of our provision is through long, uninterrupted sessions of purposeful play which is facilitated by staff who provide skilled adult intervention which has intentional teaching points. This supports the child to move their learning forward through their interests within the seven areas of learning which make up the Early Years Foundation Stage. The staff plan adult led provocations for children to make progress in Literacy, Maths and where appropriate in other areas of learning.

Assessment is ongoing, formative and integral to teaching. It informs immediate next steps through responsive interactions rather than relying on formal testing. Staff observe, then interact with the pupils which extends their learning. It is interaction rather than data focussed.

3. Areas of Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises seven areas of learning:

Prime areas

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

Specific areas

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Art and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. Most teaching happens using an “In the Moment Planning” (ITMP) teaching approach, where the adults observe the children in their play and respond immediately to move the child’s learning forward. There are small bursts of whole class teaching in certain areas such as phonics, maths and circle time to ensure curriculum coverage. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Staff make continual assessments of children’s learning and use this information to immediately plan to develop the child’s thought processes and therefore their learning. Assessment of the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in the children’s individual ‘Learning Journal’ on an online system called Tapestry. When observations are carried out and published on Tapestry, parents have immediate access to their child’s learning experiences. The Learning Journals also contain information provided by parents, allowing families to upload their own observations of activities which take place out of school. We seek parents’ consent to use Tapestry and parents have the opportunity to ask their children not to be included either individually or as part of a group, in accordance with data protection principles.

Once a term, each child has the opportunity to be a Focus Child. A letter goes home to parents in the preceding week to enquire about the children’s interests at that moment, also giving parents the opportunity to ask any questions about their child’s learning. At the end of the week, the learning for that week is uploaded onto Tapestry to share with parents.

Within the final term we provide a written summary to parents, reporting on their child’s progress. For Pre-School children we provide a summary of their interests and progress through their unique Characteristics of Effective Learning. At the end of Reception we assess against the Early Learning Goals and assessment scales as well as their Characteristics of Effective Learning.

At the end of the Reception year, we also send a summary of these assessments to the Local Education Authority (LEA) for analysis. There are 13 Summary Scales. The child’s next teacher will use this information to make plans for the year ahead.

4. The Learning Environment

At Sidcot School 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 Early Years Department is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas within the two rooms where the children can be active or quiet. The inside and outside spaces are set up in such a way that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources and are encouraged to do so independently. The Early Years Department has its own enclosed outdoor play area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different

scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use their senses and be physically active and engage in 'risky play'.

We are also fortunate enough to have lovely grounds within the school. When appropriate, opportunities are taken to explore these grounds, a spark to learning and development. This includes weekly Forest School sessions, where children have time to explore the forest, following their own interests.

5. Teaching and Learning Styles

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. Features that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, that children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches that are 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 Early Years Foundation Stage;
- 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, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are shared with parents;
- The clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it.
- The regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The importance of knowing the individual child to allow adults to support their learning and development.
- Adults play a crucial role in extending children's learning through sensitive, timely interactions that build on children's interests and thinking.

Transitions are carefully planned to support continuity of learning and emotional wellbeing.

Children's emotional wellbeing is central to all aspects of provision and is supported through secure relationships, predictable routines and responsive care.

Adults are aware that behaviour is a form of communication and carefully unpick the needs of the child in a supportive and inclusive way.

6. Key Person

For all children in Reception, their key person is the class teacher. For children in Pre-School, staff members have key children to allow positive, meaningful, and purposeful learning relationships to develop. The Pre-School Lead oversees the children's progress and liaises with the child's key person. The key person is shared with parents.

The role of the key person:

- Ensures the learning and care is tailored to the child's needs.
- Help children become familiar with the setting;
- Offer a settled and positive relationship;
- Engage and support parents in supporting children at home.

7. Health and Safety/ Safeguarding

We ensure the children are supervised during both snack time and lunchtime. Any food intolerances or allergies are communicated with the wider school community and a member of staff is allocated to ensure this is communicated in the canteen with the child. We ensure we have 2-3 members of staff to walk over to lunch and 3-4 members whilst eating lunch, depending on adult/child ratio's

All members of the EY team have full paediatric first aid training. Two members of the team have Food Hygiene training. Any medications (non-prescribed or prescribed) are delivered and managed by the school nurses.

All members of the team use staff iPads or devices to photograph children which are deleted frequently. Staff do not use personal devices to take photographs of children.

The risk assessments are shared frequently and staff who are preparing the outside area do a risk walk to feedback to the team. Risk assessments are signed by all staff.

All staff members attend the annual safeguarding training. The Head of Early Years is the DSL trained and the safeguarding officer for the whole school.

All safeguarding procedures are in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (2.1), which staff must follow at all times.

8. Inclusion

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

At Sidcot School we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of children's varying life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, 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 with and from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Please refer to English as an Additional Language, Special Educational Needs and Disability and Equal Opportunities Policies.

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 liaise with internal or external employees to provide support as necessary (ie. Speech and Language Therapy, Learning Support).

Where concerns are identified, early intervention is planned in collaboration with the Learning Support Teacher and, where appropriate, external professionals.

9. Positive Relationships

At Sidcot School, we understand that children become strong and independent individuals when they develop secure relationships with siblings, parents, other children, teachers, classroom assistants and all other caregivers. As well as modelling how children build positive relationships, we encourage children to resolve their own conflicts whenever they can. We hold Circle Time sessions when needed where relationships are explored through discussions and linked to our Sidcot School Wheel.

All staff members have a termly Supervision/Coaching session with Head of Early Years which is child focussed.

10. Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We also recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

All staff aim to build positive relationships with parents to provide the best outcomes for the children in our care. Staff are approachable and make themselves available to parents should they have any concerns or questions they would like to discuss.

We build positive relationships with parents by:

- Giving parents the opportunity to talk about their child and their needs before the child starts at our school.
- Having flexible admission arrangements and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances.
- Offering the opportunity for a member of staff to visit the child at their current setting prior to their start.
- Recording observations of the children's learning on an online Learning Journal using the program Tapestry allowing parents access to view their

learning as detailed above. Parents are also encouraged to upload learning that takes place out of school, so teaching staff know more about the individual child.

- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's Key Person if they have any concerns.
- Parent meetings are offered whenever a child has a focus week, so their learning and development can be discussed: typically, this is 3 times a year.
- When it is a child's termly focus week, a letter goes home asking parents for information on how they feel their child is developing at that time. This opens up a discussion and encourages parents to ask any questions they may have.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

All Staff involved with the Early Years Foundation Stage aim to develop good relationships with children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy is written by the Head of Early Years, monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed in two years or earlier if necessary.

12. Change History

Date of change	Detail significant changes and any new legislation / guidance taken into account
25.03.2017	New Policy – complete rewrite - adopted by Board of Governors
24.01.2019	Minor changes. Updated to incorporate the use of online journal "Tapestry"
01.09.2019	Reviewed and updated
15.01.2021	Minor wording and formatting changes. Contents page added.
13.11.23	Wording changed due to new EYFS framework
28.11.23	6. Key person information. 7. Health and Safety/ Safeguarding provision 8. Supervision and Coaching initiative for staff members Contents page updated
1 September 2024	No changes made
1 September 2025	New information from updated EYFS Guidance (Information) Minor rewording due to changes resulting from EY staff meetings Minor rewording due to new legislation (e.g. nutrition guidance)
1 September 2026	A few minor edits made to clarify and tighten up language
