

# Springfield Early Years Policy



## Intention

To provide a set of guidelines, standards, and procedures established by the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) framework](#) in England, that governs the care and education of children from birth to five years old.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage at Springfield Primary School, we aim to provide an atmosphere in which children can make the transition from home to nursery to school as secure and happy an experience as possible. We want to offer a friendly, caring environment where all children feel valued and welcomed. We firmly believe it is our duty to help prepare all our children for the next stage of their lives to enable them to contribute positively to their community. We believe in the potential of every child, so all our children are given the opportunity to develop the ability to surprise themselves and those around them. They are taught to challenge themselves to build confidence and resilience which they can apply to their own life experiences, now and in the future. We believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage is an integral part of a child's education where all learning begins. It is the foundation that all other learning builds upon. We aim to provide a wide range of learning experiences to ensure learning is inspiring, exciting, purposeful and builds upon prior knowledge. Our aim is to ensure that all children receive the very best start to their education so they can continue to grow, learn, succeed and enjoy life. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and has the support they need 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. Good parenting combined with high-quality early learning provides the foundations children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. ('The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE March 2014).

## Implementation

A collaborative, child-centred approach that prioritises the holistic development of young children. It begins with clear, evidence-based guidelines that support learning through play, emotional wellbeing, and inclusive practices.

## Impact

To lay a strong foundation for lifelong learning, well-being, and social mobility by ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has access to nurturing, stimulating, and developmentally appropriate care and education. Its desired impact includes narrowing the attainment gap before formal schooling begins, fostering emotional resilience, and promoting cognitive, physical, and social development during the most critical period of brain growth. By supporting families, investing in skilled practitioners, and creating inclusive environments, such a policy can help children thrive, reduce inequalities, and contribute to a healthier, more equitable society in the long term.

## Curriculum priorities

The Early Years Foundation Stage begins from birth. At Springfield this includes all children within the Nursery and Reception classes. Whether the child begins their education in the Nursery or Reception class the Early Years staff are aware of the variety of experiences and learning the children bring with them.

Our aim is to encompass all learners, extend their experiences, develop their skills and confidence and build on what they already know. Children are our collective future and at Springfield, we know that the foundations for that future are formed in the first years of education.

### Our priorities include:

- Developing key learning skills such as speaking, listening, concentration and co-operation.
- Developing early Literacy and Mathematic skills.
- A chance for children to have first-hand experiences and learn independently.
- A relevant curriculum that aids the development of skills and progression.
- Flexibility to follow children's interests.
- Focused play activities. Play is well planned and observed so adults can help children to extend their thinking. It allows children to take risks and explore and develop on their own terms. It also lets them solve problems both on their own and with others.
- Building on what children already know.
- Access to an indoor and outdoor curriculum. Children are given access to both indoor and outdoor learning wherever possible. The outdoor area is available on a free flow basis and, as in the classroom, a range of focussed activities and child-initiated learning takes place. This allows children who learn better in the outdoor environment to access the curriculum.

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS is split into seven areas of learning: 3 prime areas and 4 specific areas.

### **Prime Areas**

#### Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

This area encourages children to respect themselves and others and enables children to build up relationships with adults and peers

It encourages both independence and working together as a team and allows children to build up confidence and awareness in their own abilities.

#### Communication, and Language

This area helps children to develop the vital speaking and listening skills that are needed for them to progress in other areas. We also concentrate on Speaking and Listening skills through drama and role play. Each classroom has at least 1 role play area which children have constant access to.

#### Physical Development

This area focuses upon improving skills of co-ordination and control, both fine and gross motor. It allows children to see the benefits of being healthy and active. It also encourages children to think about self-care e.g., toileting and hygiene.

### **Specific Areas**

#### Literacy

This area helps children to develop early reading, writing and phonic skills. This is done through a range of focus and independent activities. Phonics is taught in discreet sessions following the Little Wandle framework.

#### Mathematics

Using the White Rose maths framework children learn to count reliably, understand the value of numbers (cardinality), and begin to explore simple addition and subtraction. They're encouraged to subitise and recall number bonds up to 5 and some to 10. EYFS promotes recognising patterns, understanding odd and even numbers, and exploring how numbers can be composed and decomposed. Children explore shapes, positional language, and concepts like size, weight, and capacity through hands-on activities and play.

#### Understanding of the World

This forms the foundation for later work in Science, RE, History, Geography and ICT.

Children find out lots of things about the world around them through activities based on first hand experiences.

#### Expressive Arts and Design

This forms the foundation for later work in art, music, dance, DT and role play.

Children are encouraged to express themselves using a range of media and materials and using different senses

## Characteristics of Effective Learning

- COEL encourage us to think about *how* our children learn. They run through everything and contain aspects of mastery orientation in particular 'making links'
- Children learn through their connections and need to know what they need to do when faced with a problem
- COEL is at the forefront of our minds when interacting and engaging with children

At Springfield we follow the principles of Planning in the Moment. We believe that the best levels of engagement are when children initiate their own play. We cannot predict what children are going to do but we can forward provide through quality environments and interactions

## Enabling Environments:

The environment plays a vital role in helping children to make progress and enjoy their EYFS experience. As such we ensure that:

- Environment are organised, well-resourced and stocked.
- All areas are reviewed and maintained to see which deliver the highest levels of involvement.
- Open ended resources are readily available e.g. a piece of pizza will always be a piece of pizza but wooden discs etc can be anything
- "Less is more!"
- Role play is familiar- real resources
- As a rule, only a small number of resources are set out on the tables, but everything is accessible for the children to follow their own ideas. Enhancements are made where necessary.
- Natural resources and displays create a calming environment.

## Safety

- We carry out regular fire practices, test fire alarms and we have an emergency evacuation procedure.
- Resources and equipment are appropriate to the age and stage of the child's development.
- Resources and the environment are checked regularly for signs of wear and tear.
- Resources and equipment are stored appropriately and kept orderly and ease of access and review.
- Maintenance and safety issues are reported to the site manager.
- We do not allow smoking anywhere on our site.
- We have comprehensive risk assessments in place.
- All areas of the learning environment (inside and outside) are checked daily by EYFS staff before children are granted access.
- EYFS staff follow a weekly rota to ensure all areas of the learning environment are supervised and maintained.

## Quality Interactions

We believe that staff interactions are at the core of children making good progress and we place great importance upon the role of the play partner to provide a tailored curriculum to meet children's individual needs and interests. In our environment you will see:

- Adults constantly interacting and moving learning on in tiny steps without disrupting the powerful vehicle which is their child-initiated play
- Adult-led has an objective and a purpose. The adults are leading. When play is child-led then the learning belongs to the child, we are following!
- Adults "pondering" and "wondering" rather than always asking direct questions. It allows the child to respond if they wish. It tells the child that the adult is genuinely interested, and the adult does not know everything and encourages the child to think. Where appropriate we also add in and extend language.
- The adult responds as appropriate...they know the children inside out so can tailor their response to the particular child, in the particular situation at that particular moment. They can spot the unique "teachable moment". This is the ultimate in differentiation.
- Staff will not always be recording interactions- our aim is to write less but interact more!

## Planning

At Springfield, we have thoughtfully developed our own Early Years curriculum, rooted in the principles of Development Matters, to ensure a clear focus on progression, curriculum coverage, and building on what children already know. Our approach is designed to nurture each child's unique learning journey, with curriculum maps that guide weekly planning grids and provide a coherent structure for teaching and learning. These plans are flexible and responsive, allowing us to adapt to the diverse needs of all children and follow their evolving interests. We also embed rights respecting principles throughout our planning, ensuring that every child's voice is valued and their rights are upheld within a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment.

## Baseline Assessment

On entry to Foundation Stage, all children are baselined against Development Matters Ages and Stages. This is an informal assessment done with all children and the results are collated and analysed. These results enable the teachers to plan for the next steps of all children. It also provides the school with the evidence to monitor the school's performance in later years as the children progress through the school.

Assessment evidence is collected through practitioner observations. Adults will observe and interact with children carrying out activities which they have initiated, interacting with peers and other adults. This may be in the form of anecdotal observations, planned long observations, photographs, scribed child's voice and contributions from parents or carers. Adults will observe children playing and learning across both the Prime and Specific Areas of the curriculum. For example, they will observe the children interacting with others, listening and responding, mark making or writing, using and applying their phonic and mathematic skills etc. This will be through a play-based activity that the child has either chosen or shown interest in. Adults will record the child's voice and their achievements in their assessments and make a judgement about the age and stage of development that each child is working within. This information gathered is then used to ensure individual needs are met.

As per government requirements, all Reception children will also be baselines using RBA.

All Nursery pupils are assessed on their language and communication skills using the WELLCOMM tool.

The WELLCOMM tool scores children based on their use and understanding of language based on their age in months.

- If a child achieves a green score, it means that they are using and understanding language at an age-appropriate level.
- If a child scores amber, it is an indication that a child is working below age-appropriate level and will require some extra support.
- If a child scores red, it is an indication that a child is working significantly below an age-appropriate level and may require some more specialist involvement with other agencies or Inclusion Support.
- Children that scored amber or red are screened again later in the Autumn term to see if they are now working at an age-appropriate level in their use and understanding of language. If not, they are identified for a further layer of support in Reception. Pupils who are new to the school and join Springfield later in the reception year will also be screened using the WELLCOMM tool to ensure that staff are able to assess their use and understanding of language and can identify any support needs early on.

## On-going assessment

Informal, verbal assessments of the children take place continually amongst staff as progress or difficulties are noted or commented on. Staff respond to this kind of assessment by adapting their teaching style, expectations, level of support, language or activities to suit, usually instantaneously. This proves to be a valuable aid to our planning and helps us to make informed decisions about the appropriateness of our curriculum and to make monitoring and reporting of the children's development more accurate and accountable. Parents/carers are informed via the end of term and end of year reports and via parent/carer consultations.

Staff are careful to make observations and written assessments that directly impact on children's learning and progress and do not engage in lengthy written tasks which may reduce the time spent with the children.

## Inclusive Practice

**We support equality and diversity by:**

- Treating each child as an individual.
- Using resources that reflect diversity.
- Providing appropriate strategies to meet each child's learning needs.
- Facilitating equal access to activities by all children.

**We support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities by:**

- Liaising with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator at Springfield Primary.
- Observing, assessing and monitoring each child's progress.
- Working with parents to involve them in their child's learning and to keep them informed of their child's progress.
- Involving external agencies to ensure appropriate support is in place, if needed.
- Having regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

**We support children with English as an additional language by:**

- Valuing the child's home language.
- Enabling them to use their home language in play.
- Helping them to attain a good standard of English by ensuring they have a variety of opportunities to use English in their play and learning.
- Using appropriate resources to promote languages from other countries

## Child independence (including toileting)

At Springfield Primary School, we promote and support the independence of every child. Our expectation is that children will manage their own personal care, and toileting needs whilst in attendance at our setting to the best of their ability. We understand that children are at different development stages and unless there are any medical or developmental reasons why this would not be appropriate, we work in partnerships with parents to support children towards independent toilet training.

As a school, we aim to be inclusive to all children and to consider the individual needs of each child. We see toilet training as a self-care skill that all children should have the opportunity to learn through the full support of adults, and we work in partnership with parents to support children in gaining the skills they need to become independent.

## Attendance

At Springfield we promote inclusive attendance through a whole-school approach.

Regular attendance in early education is vital because it lays the foundation for lifelong learning, social development, and emotional wellbeing. When children attend consistently, they benefit from structured routines, rich learning experiences, and opportunities to build secure relationships with peers and adults. These early interactions help develop communication skills, resilience, and confidence, qualities that are essential for future success. Consistent attendance also allows educators to better understand each child's needs and tailor support, accordingly, ensuring no child falls behind. Crucially, it fosters a sense of belonging and stability, helping children feel safe, valued, and ready to explore the world around them.

## Parent Partnerships

At Springfield, we deeply value the partnerships we build with parents and carers, recognising them as essential to every child's success and wellbeing. We believe that when schools and families work together, children thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. That's why we actively promote strong, respectful relationships with parents through open communication, regular updates, and opportunities to be involved in their child's learning journey. Whether it's through workshops, stay-and-play sessions, or informal chats at drop-off, we aim to create a welcoming environment where parents feel heard, supported, and empowered. These partnerships help us better understand each child's background, interests, and needs, allowing us to tailor our approach and celebrate progress together.

## Summary statement

In the Springfield Early Years Foundation Stage, it is our aim to provide the best early years' experience we can for the children using our provision. We are dedicated professionals who are passionate about making learning fun, exciting, appropriate and effective to give young children the kind of start to school to which they are entitled, deserve and in a style they need.

We support every child to be the best they can be throughout their time at Springfield and provide the future skills they need to become life-long learners who aim high and believe in themselves.

## Implementation and review

Early Years Policy created September 2025

To be reviewed September 2026