



## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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| <b>Approved by:</b>  | Headteacher (S Houseman) |
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| VERSION         | DATE    | AUTHOR | CHANGES                                                                                              |
| V2              | Sept 22 | SH     | Minor changes to layout & content to ensure continuing compliance with updates to the EYFS Framework |
| V2.1            | Jan 24  | SH     | Reviewed. Replaced references to Willows Academy Trust with ONE Academy Trust                        |
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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. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

[\(Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, March 2021\)](#)

## **1. Introduction**

This policy supports the policies and procedures already in place across our school. This policy details the specific aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) refers to children from birth to five years old. Dovedale accommodates children completing their final year of the EYFS in Reception. Children start the Reception year in September following their fourth birthday. Compulsory schooling begins the term following a child's fifth birthday. There are two reception classes at Dovedale offering thirty places. Each class has 2 x part-time teachers and a full-time teaching assistant. Additional adults work in the EYFS depending upon the needs of the cohort.

## **2. Aims**

Dovedale's EYFS is equally important as Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and is the beginning of the children's school journey. We aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, establishing solid foundations and developing independent and lifelong learners through:

- Adhering to the principles, themes and practice outlined in Development Matters (revised July 2021)
- Providing a broad and balanced curriculum across all areas of learning in the EYFS
- Valuing the importance of the characteristics of effective learning in order to help children achieve
- Effective Assessment in the EYFS
- Positive transition from a range of early years settings, nurseries and pre-schools
- A safe and inclusive classroom
- Successful working in partnership with parents, staff and other professionals

## **3. Principles, themes and practice**

Effective EYFS provision is built on four themes that underpin and guide the principles and practice at Dovedale.

**3.1 A Unique Child** - every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. At Dovedale, we respect and value the individuality of our youngest pupils by:

- Building upon their starting points- what they already know and can do
- Catering for their varying needs and interests
- Observing their child-initiated play in order to extend and develop this further
- Starting each theme of learning based on the children's interests
- Assessing progress throughout the school year to ensure we are moving learning on
- Carefully planning a curriculum that helps them achieve the expected Early Learning Goal by the end of the year
- Identifying when they may need additional support and offering appropriate interventions to narrow the gaps in their learning

**3.2 Positive Relationships** - children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. At Dovedale, we believe that the positive relationships we build are key to effective partnerships between all practitioners, parents, carers and families. We achieve this by:

- Ensuring a consistent approach to transition from a range of early years settings and childcare providers in our local community and further afield
- Working closely with parents, recognising that they are the first educators of their children
- Setting high expectations for both learning and behaviour by using Dovedale's REACH vision, Early Years 'Super Rules' and our class behaviour chart and our 'Rainbow merits' to ensure children know that their good choices are valued.

**3.3 Enabling Environments** - children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. At Dovedale, we achieve this through our consistent provision across both reception classrooms that:

- Provide rich and stimulating learning spaces that reflect all areas of the curriculum
- Offer theme-appropriate adult-initiated learning challenges that guide children's play
- Foster independence and creativity through the use of open-ended resources that can be freely accessed
- Celebrate children's achievements through displayed work
- Promote health and self-care through our '1decision' scheme of work looking at washing hands, eating using a knife and fork and promoting milk and fruit within the classroom
- Enables children to learn both indoors and outdoors
- Encourage children to communicate and talk about their learning and develop reasoning skills

**3.4 Learning and Development-** children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. This covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

## **4. Curriculum**

The EYFS curriculum is organised into seven areas of learning and development- three prime areas and four specific areas. Each area plays an important part in providing a broad and balanced curriculum and they are most effectively used in a cross-curricular way as they interconnect. The **prime areas** ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are strengthened and applied in the four **specific areas** of learning.

### **4.1 The Prime Areas are:**

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups, and to have confidence in their abilities.
- **Communication and Language** - involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves, and speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical Development** - involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

#### 4.2 The Specific Areas are:

- **Literacy**- involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** - involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the World** - involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

At Dovedale, all areas are delivered through a well-planned play-based approach, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In reception, our long and medium-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long-term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half-termly topic-based approach, which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

#### 4.3 Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective learning. These highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and exploring (engagement)** - including finding out and exploring; playing with what they know and being willing to 'have a go'
- **Active learning (motivation)** - including being involved and concentrating; keeping trying and enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- **Creating and thinking critically (thinking)** - including having their own ideas, making links and choosing ways to do things.

#### **4.4 Play**

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in EYFS at Dovedale. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through play to think creatively and critically alongside other children and on their own. They are able to practise skills, and build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

#### **4.5 Our Curriculum**

- WOW moments to either kick start a topic or to maintain children's interest throughout including visits out of school, visitors into the classroom or themed events such as 'Dinosaurs escaping', 'Caterpillars arriving' 'Paddington being sent in a suitcase' etc
- Opportunities to reflect on learning for children to 'show off' what they have learnt throughout a theme
- Child-friendly key skills which lend themselves well to the EYFS characteristics of effective learning

### **5. Assessment**

Throughout the Reception year at Dovedale children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

#### **5.1 Baseline Assessment**

During the first full weeks at school, reception teachers assess the knowledge of each child using the Reception Baseline Assessment. This is done on a 1:1 basis. Alongside this, we also complete a Dovedale baseline based around pencil grip and cutting skills, name writing, rhyme, initial sounds, shapes and patterns. Following the completion of the baseline assessment the data is analysed and shared with the EYFS team and moderated across the ONE Academy Trust - EYFS cluster. Reception teachers then use this data to prioritise the next steps for planning as well as set individual targets and any needed interventions.

#### **5.2 Ongoing Summative Assessment**

Reliable and accurate assessment in the EYFS is underpinned by many principles, which are identified in the 'EYFS Profile Handbook':

- Assessment is based primarily on the practitioner's knowledge of the pupil. Knowledge is gained predominantly from observation and interaction in a range of daily activities and events.
- Responsible pedagogy must be in place so that the provision enables each pupil to demonstrate his or her learning and development fully.

- Embedded learning is identified by assessing what a pupil can do consistently and independently in a range of everyday situations.
- An effective assessment presents a holistic view of a pupil's learning and development.
- Accurate assessments take account of contributions from a range of perspectives including the pupil, their parents and other relevant
- We also collect evidence using Dojo Portfolio which can then be shared with parents and guardians.

A vast amount of our assessment in the EYFS at Dovedale is continuous throughout the reception year to build a true reflection of the child's consistent and independent capabilities. We gather information about each child using a range of sources such as:

- Adult-led focused activities recorded in Maths, theme, phonics or challenge books.
- Observation of children's play
- Photographic evidence
- Examples of children's child-initiated work
- WOW cards for parents identifying children's achievements at home, which are celebrated in school
- Professional judgment of our children is integral to the entire process

We match this evidence against the age bands and ELG for each child to help to identify learning priorities and plan the next stages in the learning experiences for each child.

## **5 Termly Formative Assessment**

In addition to the ongoing summative assessment, at three stages throughout the year, usually towards the end of each term, children are more formally assessed in 'Mathematics' and 'Phonics' one to one with a teacher or teaching assistant. Reading is assessed continuously through our read write inc phonics sessions – being assessed termly after the first half term, then moving onto the necessary colour band.

### **5.4 End of Year Reporting to Local Authority**

At the end of the school year, reception teachers report each child's progress to the local authority (LA). Judgments are made based on the following assessment ratings set out in the ' EYFS assessment and reporting arrangements (ARA):

1. A pupil who is at the 'emerging' level
  2. A pupil who is at the 'expected' (ELG) level
- A. A pupil who has not been assessed due to long periods of absence

### **5.5 End of Reporting to Parents**

Class teachers complete an annual report for each child in their class and teaching assistants write additional reports if they have worked closely with children with specific needs. Teachers report briefly on progress in each area of learning as well as the characteristics of learning. The report includes the child's strengths and areas for development. These are written in June and sent home to parents in July.

## **6. Induction & Transition**

At Dovedale, we have established a strong procedure for our intake of a new cohort of reception children as well as their transition into Key Stage 1.

This includes:

- Reception teachers visiting the many feeder nurseries and pre-school settings, meeting the children in a familiar environment
- Parent induction meeting in the summer term to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child
- Three play sessions, to help them prepare for their new experiences.
- Children come into school for a full day from the start – allowing parents to come into class, drop them at our outdoor area, and then at the main gate to allow transition
- ‘Meet the Teacher’ event in September
- Close working relationship with the Key Stage 1 to ensure children have the opportunity to meet with their new Year 1 teacher(s) in their classrooms at least twice at the end of the year, once during the whole school swap and again for a storytime session.
- Reception teachers meet with Year 1 teachers to ensure that the new teacher has a well-rounded picture of the children before the new school year. This may include sharing each child’s knowledge, understanding and achievements, including end-of-year assessment data as well as any next steps for learning

## **7. Inclusion**

**7.1** At Dovedale we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion)

**7.2** In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, more able children, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

**7.3** 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. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

## **8. Health & Safety and Safeguarding**

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance and we adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school; our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit from a Government scheme. Reception children are encouraged eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

Each foundation stage classroom has access to its own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques, and throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

## **9. Roles & Responsibilities**

### **9.1 Role of parents**

Parents are a child's first educators and play an important role in the education of their child. At Dovedale, parents are made to feel welcome and valued. We believe we have a friendly and welcoming ethos, which allows parents to feel they can speak to all EYFS staff about their child. We maintain through:

- Discussion between parents and teachers about their child's needs and interests before starting school
- Involvement of parents in the induction process (see transition)
- Parent target setting and consultation evenings including one additional for identified children who may need additional support
- Weekly newsletter via class Dojo to inform parents of what is happening in school every week including up-and-coming events
- Pre-topic tasks and WOW cards
- Home reading diaries
- Termly Newsletters are provided electronically
- Class webpages are updated every 1-2 weeks
- Opportunities to share exciting events with their children in and out of school including Mummy Day, Class Assemblies and School trips
- Access to teacher email addresses if needed
- Open door policy whereby parents can discuss day-to-day concerns where necessary at the end of every day and if needed a further meeting so that any issues can be resolved quickly

### **9.2 Role of the EYFS Team**

The EYFS Team consists of class teachers and teaching assistants. An ethos of continuity across the team is crucial at Dovedale therefore meetings are implemented monthly to include the TAs but teachers meet every two weeks. The Early Years Leader disseminated any appropriate information such as the action plan for EYFS, data analysis, feedback from courses or SLT meetings, dates, our priorities and next steps.

### **9.3 Role of ONE Academy Trust**

In addition to the EYFS team, at Dovedale, we work very closely with our academy cluster schools- Sawley Infants School and Shardlow Primary School and have established an EYFS cluster. We meet at least each term, share good practice, compare results and analyse data, moderate children's work, discuss training, and identify any next steps for EYFS in the cluster schools.