



Sedbergh

PREP AT CASTERTON

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY (RECEPTION YEAR)	
Version	July 2025
Effective from	September 2025
Extent of Policy	Casterton, Sedbergh Prep School
Policy Owner	Pete Burrell
Governor	Mr Mike Piercy
Review by	July 2026
Frequency of Audit	Annual
Circulation	Parents
Publication	Website

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY (RECEPTION YEAR)

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure 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 choose to use early years services, they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”

AIMS

We believe that the Early Years are critical in children’s development and that the EYFS builds a firm basis for future learning, development and independence. We aim to:

- Provide a happy, secure, well-ordered and stimulating environment, where children can develop as independent individuals through interaction with sensitive adults and other children.
- To offer a broad and balanced curriculum which extends previous learning and covers the seven areas of learning and development as set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (July 2023, updated 1 November 2024).
- To ensure that children develop positive attitudes to learning, self-motivation, curiosity, confidence and responsibility.
- To provide children with first hand learning experiences rooted in purposeful play in which they can become actively engaged, expressing thoughts, ideas and feelings.
- To develop the cultural capital of our pupils through the taught curriculum, extra curricular activities, engagement with our local community and cultural experiences.
- To develop the whole child socially, spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually and aesthetically.
- To develop and maintain partnership with parents and others including other professionals who are involved with the development of the child.

ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS AND INDUCTION

- Prospective parents and children are able to make informal visits to the Mulberry Bush Nursery and to the Reception Class. This allows them to become familiar with the school and to meet staff.
- Children are admitted to the Reception Class in the September following their fourth birthday. They either transfer from our Nursery, from another Nursery or directly from home. The children will attend full time from the beginning of the Michaelmas term.
- Children due to join the Reception Class are able to spend one or two mornings in the class after the half term break at the end of the preceding May. This allows them to become familiar with the setting.
- Meetings are held at the beginning of the Michaelmas Term for parents of Reception class children to discuss the organisation of the class, schemes used, reading record books, timetables. This is also an opportunity for the parents to meet staff and discuss any matters of concern that they might have.

A Unique Child

At Casterton, Sedbergh Preparatory School we recognize 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 dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, celebration/sharing assemblies, and rewards to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

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

In our 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 our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children, irrespective of gender, race and ability. All children will have equal access to the Curriculum.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and which will develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on individual learning needs.
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children in order for them to learn effectively.
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of every child is valued.
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The following principles will underpin teaching and learning in the classroom:

- Teaching is based on a sound knowledge of the Areas of Learning and Development and the Early Learning Goals.
- It is recognised that purposeful play is the natural way children learn.
- Teachers and other practitioners will use a balance of approaches and groupings appropriate to what is being taught.
- There will be a balance of teacher directed and child chosen activities.
- Children are encouraged to contribute according to their own experiences and interest.
- Learning will be active, ensuring choice and independence.
- Learning will take place outdoors and indoors.
- Teachers recognise that all children are individuals and have a variety of needs.

The learning environment will be such that the children feel secure, confident and stimulated. It will be safe and enable children to be independent.

ORGANISATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Reception Class are at school full time. Formal teaching ends at 3.20pm for Reception pupils. Optional activity sessions are operated by members of school staff which extend the school day until 4.55pm.

The Nursery is located within an Early Years unit and Reception is located within the main school within the Pre-Prep Department. Sports facilities for the EYFS include the main school gym, swimming pool, pavilion, all-weather pitch and sports field. EYFS have outdoor areas including the Den, with direct access from the EYFS unit and Pre-Prep. The importance of an outdoor curriculum is recognised and planned for.

The staff set high expectations for children's attainment and progress. Teaching will use a balance of approaches and groupings, appropriate to the age of the children and what is being taught. Sessions are organised so that there is a balance of teacher initiated and child initiated activities. The children's own interests and experiences are valued and their learning will take these into account. Teaching will include the wider curriculum which promotes the development of the whole child and which includes the opportunity to explore the unexpected.

THE AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

There are seven areas of learning and development which shape educational programmes in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The three prime areas of learning are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development.

There are four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

The EYFS planning includes the following:

- Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- Physical development provides opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children are also helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- 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 own abilities.
- Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are 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, space, 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. These experiences also further develop our children's cultural capital.
- Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, 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.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEARNING (COEL)

- CoEL advocate that in planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn, and then reflect these in their practice. A child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified by the EYFS are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The focus of the CoEL is on how children learn rather than what they learn i.e. process over outcome. Underpinning the CoEL is the understanding that during their earliest years, children form attitudes about learning that will last a lifetime. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement during these years will be creative, and adventurous learners throughout their lives. Children who do not receive this sort of support and interaction are likely to have a much different attitude about learning later on in life. It is important to remember that children are individuals who bring their own needs, talents and histories to the learning environment.

EYFS staff plan together to ensure that there is continuity and progression throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Planning takes the form of:

- I. Long term plans. These identify main topics to be covered throughout the year.
 - i. Medium term plans. These link the Areas of Learning and Development and the Early Learning Goals to specific planned activities and will identify assessment opportunities.
 - ii. In the Reception Class literacy is planned in line with the Primary Framework for Literacy. Mathematics is planned in accordance with the Primary Framework for Mathematics. The Read Write Inc. Phonics programme is used to deliver targeted and high quality phonics tuition, and the White Rose Maths programme supports a Mastery approach to mathematics.
 - iii. Short term plans (weekly/daily). These include specific activity plans, clear differentiation for groups and individuals, and organisational management including the role of the adults.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING TO PARENTS

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and staff to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. On-going assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. EYFS staff observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, EYFS staff respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress, as well as observations that parents and carers share.

- Records will be kept of each child's development and achievement in the form of observations, annotated examples of work, photographs, checklists and dated comments on Tapestry (an online journal). Children's work is also collated and displayed in Floor Books.
- Assessment will be integrated into planning and the information gathered will be used to inform future planning.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile will be completed for each child during their Reception year.
- Progress checks are written in October and February and are discussed with parents at these times.
- Parents may make an appointment to meet with staff at any other time.

THE ROLE OF THE ADULT

The Governor for EYFS will be responsible for:

- Agreeing the policy, monitoring and evaluating the impact of the policy. This is done through delegating the responsibility to the curriculum committee, particularly the Preparatory School Governor.

The Head of Pre-Prep will be responsible for:

The oversight of relevant EYFS policies, promoting the development of the policies and monitoring and evaluating. The Head of Pre-Prep will make sure the EYFS policy is being implemented in Reception.

The Lead Early Years Foundation Stage Teacher will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the policy is implemented consistently and reviewed regularly in consultation with other staff.
- Monitoring and planning the curriculum (in consultation with other teaching staff particularly the Mulberry Bush Nursery and the Year 1 teacher).
- Ensuring that children's progress is recorded effectively and is passed on and understood by the staff in Key Stage 1.
- Keeping informed about current requirements.
- Liaising with other agencies.
- Developing experience through attendance at courses.
- Keeping other school teaching staff and governors informed about EYFS developments.
- Provide support, advice and encouragement to colleagues.
- Ensuring that all resources are used effectively.

EYFS Class Teachers will be responsible for:

- Implementing the policy through their planning, organisation and teaching.
- Helping children to develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Developing and maintaining positive relationships with parents and carers.

Teaching Assistants will be responsible for:

- Supporting the class teacher in implementing the policy.

Voluntary adult helpers will be responsible for:

- Supporting the class teacher in implementing the policy as determined by the class teacher.

Sixth form pupils will be responsible for:

- Supporting the class teacher in implementing the policy as determined by the class teacher.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

Positive Relationships

At Sedbergh Preparatory School we recognize that children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with all our children and their families.

- The school recognises that parents/carers are the child's first educators and that an effective partnership between home and school is vital.
- The school will seek to involve parents/carers in the classroom and on visits. The school will encourage both regular and occasional involvement of parents/carers.
- The school will ensure that parents/carers receive regular information about what happens in school and in the classroom through newsletters, displays, notice boards, home/school planners and regular face-to-face contact as well as through the online Tapestry journal.

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. At Sedbergh Prep School the EYFS Lead Teacher acts as the 'Key Person' to children in Reception. The EYFS Lead Teacher will maintain regular contact with the Mulberry Bush Nursery to maintain parity between Nursery and Reception.

CHILDREN'S WELFARE

- Parents must complete an emergency contact form for all pupils, which include relevant medical, personal and social information.
- The school's Health and Safety Policy will ensure the health and safety of pupils.
- The school has an Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policy, which applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Recordable accidents must be recorded on school accident forms and parents notified as soon as possible.
- The school will work closely with the DSL and Social Services in monitoring any pupils at risk.

LIAISON

- The Early Years Foundation Stage classes work closely with Key Stage 1 classes, including assemblies, some lessons and playtimes.
- The EYFS Lead Teacher and Head of Pre-Prep will liaise directly with the Director OR Deputy of the Mulberry Bush to share facilities, EYFS practice and shared activities.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage class teacher, Head of Pre-Prep and the Prep School Deputy Heads will seek out opportunities to develop further links with the local community.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Lead EYFS Teacher is to be responsible for the day to day monitoring of the principles stated in this policy. They will regularly review practice and evaluate outcomes to inform future action and development plans.

The Head of Pre-Prep under the direction of the Head of the Preparatory School and a named Governor is responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The EYFS Lead Teacher and the Head of Pre-Prep will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.