

Spring Common School **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy.**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Spring Common School, children usually join the EYFS in either their Nursery or Reception year. However children do, on occasion, join us in their pre-nursery year and some may join the EY class after a reception year in a different setting if this suits their individual needs and educational requirements.

In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

We endeavour to ensure that children “learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.” We aim to support children in their learning through “teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life.” (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2012)

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

A Unique Child

In the EYFS at Spring Common, we have high aspirations for our children and we recognise that every child has the potential to be a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use individualised praise, encouragement and rewards as well as sharing success in assemblies and with parents to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at Spring Common School, regardless of need. Children are treated as individuals and have appropriate access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is entirely individualised in the Early Years to meet the needs of each child. Assessments and subsequent plans take into account contributions from a range of perspectives, including parents, therapists and other professionals to ensure the needs of children are met effectively. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers and therapists or doctors at an early stage and this discussion will continue through all aspects of the health, care and education of each of our children (For further information on SEN and inclusion, please see our whole school policy).

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 stimulating opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively, whatever their starting point;
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which adult knowledge of the individual is recognised as crucial;
- 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.

Teaching Children with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) in the Early Years Class

General guidance on the approach to teaching and learning for children with ASC may be found within the school's Autism Handbook.

In Early Years students with ASC demonstrate the following characteristic learning and thinking styles:

- A relative strength in concrete thinking, for example, filling containers with sand as opposed to role-playing with props.
- A preference for visually as opposed to orally presented materials, for example, display boards, use of labels, maximising interests such as numbers.
- A relatively slow speed of processing of orally presented materials leading to partial or incomplete understanding of a spoken instruction.
- A relative strength in rote memory, for example, counting and recall of sequences such as days of the week and greeting songs.
- A strength in understanding visuospatial relationships, for example, PD table for hand-eye coordination.
- Difficulties in abstract thinking, for example, topic themes that are not based on their own experience.
- Difficulties in social cognition, for example, role play, sharing spaces, making choices in child initiated activities.
- Difficulties in communication. Many people with ASC are reluctant writers, some ASC adults describe struggling to understand why they were expected to write down something they already knew.
- Unusual patterns of attention, for example, total absorption in a favourite activity and fleeting attention to something that is not preferred.

Many children with ASC experience difficulties in flexibility of thought and so free flow environments are particularly hard for them to manage. It is good practice, therefore to keep a tick chart of activities engaged with and seek to broaden range over time. Aspects of the Early Years environment may be highly stimulating and lead to problems of sensory overload.

Students with ASC are often helped by:

- Schedules
- Adult modelling play patterns and sequences
- 'I am working for ...' or other reward charts
- Labelling of classroom areas and resources
- Having the same activity out in the same area for a week

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the EYFS are 'safe'. We aim to provide children with the basic skills they need in order to keep themselves healthy and safe. We support children with all aspects of this, including health, medical and intimate care, encouraging independence in

every possible area. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill at their individual level. Children should be allowed to take appropriate risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

(See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

“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.”

At Spring Common School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At Spring Common School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to consistently develop and maintain caring, respectful, professional relationships with children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we highly value their knowledge and the contribution they make to the education and learning of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents at school visits and home visits before their child starts in our school and recording everything parents have to say in the ‘My unique child’ settling document;
- providing a transition period at the end of each summer term as well as supporting individual transitions as necessary so that the pace is set by the child and the family first and foremost;
- inviting EYFS parents to termly meetings to discuss their child’s learning in detail and to request their input in planning the next learning steps;
- inviting parents to add to their child’s ‘Learning Journey’ annual report book on a termly basis;
- communicating daily with parents via the ‘Home - School Diary’ and making regular calls to parents;

- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns or they have any information they wish to share;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, open days, fun days and other special events;
- providing parents with the opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" moments which inform planning and provision;

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children can feel secure and confident. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Children are encouraged and overtly taught how to access this as independently as possible and where more appropriate, the children are brought to the activities or the activities are brought to them to ensure they have opportunities to access the full range of curriculum areas.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and follows children's interests. It is these interests that form the basis of planning, using the 'Possible Lines of Direction' format and these are gathered from close observation of children, along with information from parents. These observations are recorded in each child's 'Learning Journey' as well as in their assessment folder.

Play based, exploratory learning is paramount in the EYFS and children are encouraged to direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Play skills are modelled repeatedly to children and skilled staff members enhance play and extend experiences as needed to further individualise observed learning.

Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other professionals, children's developmental levels are assessed against all seven areas of learning. As the three prime areas underpin all other learning and development, it is likely that a child at Spring Common may have a need to focus increased attention on one or more of these areas initially. As such, whilst learning opportunities are provided each day across all seven areas, the prime areas form the basis of much of our daily learning through routines, planned activities and provision for child initiated play.

At Spring Common School:

“Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part of children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning” (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2012)

In Spring Common EYFS we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These 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.
(Taken from statutory framework for the EYFS 2012)

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Health and Safety

At Spring Common School there are clear procedures for assessing risk as well as rigorous safeguarding, manual handling, intimate care and child protection policies (see whole school policies) which include procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. These policies are applicable across the whole school and therefore include consideration of the EYFS.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2012, at Spring Common we undertake;

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child’s needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist and written permission has been obtained from parents/carers. A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and the setting informs the child’s parents and/or carers on the same day. Medical training is provided for all staff annually and additional training is provided as and when necessary. We have continuous access to nursing care and advice through our onsite school nurse and telephone contact with additional school nurses.
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times

- Children's dietary needs are recorded and provided for daily, including trained use of Gastrostomy feeding if required
- A snack and sink area ensures we can provide healthy snacks and drinks as required. Members of EYFS staff undergo food hygiene training which is updated as required.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept in accordance with whole school procedures. All staff receive resuscitation training annually and a number of EYFS staff have full paediatric first aid training and there are also many other members of school staff trained to this level.
- The behaviour management systems of the whole school also apply to EYFS and all school staff receive behaviour management and positive handling training (See whole school behaviour policy)
- The health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment are applicable across the school, (see whole school Health and Safety policy).
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy is available within the school and consideration has been given to the specific needs of children in the EYFS class during the practice and implementation of this procedure.
- Mobile phones are not used around the children and photographs and videos are only taken using school equipment. Please see the whole school safeguarding policy for further details on the use of mobile phones and cameras.
- EYFS staff are expected to wear appropriate clothing that enables them to move freely and to get to a child's level whilst playing and engaging with children at floor level. Expectations are in line with whole school policy.

Transitions

From home or feeder settings

Prior to a child's entry into Spring Common EYFS, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- A home visit is offered to each family, in which 2 members of staff (usually the EYFS teacher and an EYFS Teaching Assistant) visit the family at home. During this time, parents will be supported in completion of the 'My Unique Child' document. School staff will meet the child and begin to get an idea of his/her interests and needs. School staff will discuss aspects of school life and expectations, whilst parents will have an opportunity to ask any questions they may have. This is usually completed during the summer term, but should be provided prior to entry for all EYFS children, regardless of start date.
- The 'My Unique Child' document, completed by parents, with support from EYFS Staff as appropriate, is used to support transitions and to inform planning until further assessment data can be gathered. The information it contains is crucial in the settling process as it enables staff to provide a familiar starting point for children.
- Members of staff from Spring Common EYFS make visits to any feeder settings currently attended by new EYFS children. These visits enable staff to gather data about how the child reacts to experiences provided within their current educational setting and about any strategies or systems that are already in place to support the child.
- Children attending other settings, who have accepted September places for Spring Common EYFS may be able to attend for initial summer term visits with their current 1:1 support worker if appropriate. This may also be appropriate for children who start at different points in the year. In some cases, parents or portage workers may be able to support these initial visits if this is deemed appropriate, for example where the child is

currently unable to attend another setting and therefore does not have a 1:1 support. Inclusion visits may be possible in some cases however these would be arranged by the school based on individual need.

- All children who have accepted September places for Spring Common EYFS will be invited to attend for transition visits at the end of the summer term, during the whole school transitions period (usually 2 weeks). During this time, most children are likely to attend several sessions and this will be guided by their individual need and response to the transition and settling process.
- All aspects of the settling and transition process will be individualised for each child and family based on need. Spring Common recognises that some children settle more quickly than others. The length and timing of visits or initial sessions will vary depending on a number of factors, including a child's physical ability to deal with the demands of the school day and the time it takes for them to begin to feel safe in the school environment.

At Spring Common, we recognise that transition into our EYFS is a hugely important and emotional time for children and their families. As such, we are committed to supporting families throughout this process to ensure that each child is enabled to embark upon a healthy and happy relationship with school life that will be carried with them throughout their education.

Moving on from EYFS

At the end of each year, parents receive detailed information about their child's progress and current development in the form of the Annual Report and Learning Journey book. During the final term in a child's Reception year, the EYFS Profile is completed in line with statutory requirements and information is shared with parents through the end of year report. This report also contains information about the way in which a child is learning, as identified through the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

As Spring Common School provides exclusively for children with Special Education Needs, it is not always appropriate or useful for a child's level of development to be assessed against the Early Learning Goals. In such cases, the data reported in the EYFS Profile will be broken down when reported to parents, to give a clearer picture of the level a child is working at, rather than whether children are meeting expected levels of mainstream development. Where achievement against the 'Early Learning Goals' is not directly reported to parents, this is because a child is currently working below the age related expectations of the EYFS and will have been reported in the profile as 'emerging' in these areas of learning.

Children at Spring Common do not always leave the EYFS class at the end of the Reception year as the school takes an individualised approach to planning provision based on need. An EYFS style approach to learning is also continued into Class One and children will be transferred onto the National Curriculum or P-Levels assessment system by the time they reach the end of Year 2, in line with Cambridgeshire guidance.

Ratified by School Governors:

To be reviewed annually or as necessary.