



## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy November 2024

|                                 |               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|
| Nominated Lead Member of Staff: | Gemma Thorne  |
| Status & Review Cycle:          | Bi-annual     |
| Next Review Date:               | November 2026 |

### Introduction

*“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.”* (‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.’ DfE March 2021).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

At Shalford Infant and Nursery School, our Nursery can accommodate a maximum of 24 children per session. We offer two attendance options to suit the needs of families:

- **30 hours** per week: Children attend **5 full days**.
- **15 hours** per week: Children attend **2.5 days**, Monday to Wednesday morning **or** Wednesday afternoon to Friday.

We are committed to being inclusive and supportive of all children. For children with **additional needs**, we will consider other attendance options to ensure their individual needs are met effectively.

Our **Reception class** welcomes children at the beginning of the school year, and to ease the transition, we implement a **staggered intake**. This approach ensures that each child receives the individual attention they need to settle comfortably into school life. The staggered intake allows children to gradually become familiar with their new environment, teachers, and routines, fostering confidence and emotional security as they begin their formal education.

### Our vision

At **Shalford Infant & Nursery School**, in the Early Years, we strive to nurture **happy, confident, and well-rounded individuals** with an unquenchable love for learning. Our vision is to create a **safe, nurturing, and enabling environment** where every child feels valued and has the opportunity to thrive.

We recognise that **each child is unique**, and therefore, we ensure that all teaching and learning experiences are **tailored to their individual needs and interests**. Our goal is to inspire children to be:

- **Curious:** Encouraging them to explore the world around them with wonder and enthusiasm.
- **Challenged:** Motivating them to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth.
- **Resilient:** Supporting them to bounce back from setbacks and persist in their learning journey.
- **Problem-solvers:** Equipping them with the skills to think critically and independently.

We believe in fostering a **positive mindset**, where children take pride in their accomplishments and **celebrate their achievements**, no matter how great or small. At Shalford, we aim to lay the foundations for lifelong learning, instilling in each child the confidence and curiosity to excel in everything that they do.

## Our Aims

At **Shalford Infant & Nursery School**, our Early Years provision is designed to support children in their development, learning, and transition through the foundational stages of education. Our aims are:

- **Smooth Transitions:**
  - Support children in making a smooth transition from home to school.
  - Help children transition seamlessly from a Nursery/Pre-school setting into Reception.
  - Ensure a smooth transition for all children from Early Years to Key Stage One.
- **Strong Relationships:** Build strong, positive relationships with all children based on **mutual respect**, fostering a sense of trust and security.
- **Skilled Staff:** Ensure all staff have a solid understanding of how children develop and learn, which is reflected in their **teaching and interactions** with children.
- **Staff Expertise:** Ensure staff are confident in discussing the progress, strengths, and needs of the children in their care.
- **Engaging Learning Experiences:** Provide a variety of learning opportunities that **excite, engage, and motivate** children, stimulating their natural curiosity.
- **Learning Through Play:** Extend and develop children's learning through **play**, engaging in meaningful conversations that build on their ideas and interests.
- **Personalised Curriculum:** Carefully and effectively plan and adapt our curriculum to meet the **individual needs** of the children, considering their starting points, experiences, and progress.
- **Achieving Early Learning Goals:** Support children to reach the **expected levels** in the Early Learning Goals by the end of Reception, through thorough and thoughtful curriculum planning.
- **Ongoing Assessment:** Regularly observe and assess children's progress and future learning needs, sharing these with parents and carers to ensure ongoing collaboration and support.
- **Targeted Support:** Identify areas where children may need **additional support** and implement opportunities and interventions that address those needs.
- **Child-led Learning:** Provide learning experiences that are **guided by the children's interests**, helping to make learning relevant and engaging.
- **Risk-taking and Exploration:** Give children opportunities to assess and take risks in a **safe environment**, encouraging them to explore and interact with their surroundings.
- **Reflective Learners:** Encourage children to **reflect on their own learning**, fostering self-awareness and promoting a positive attitude towards learning.
- **Indoor and Outdoor Learning:** Ensure children have access to rich and varied learning opportunities both **inside and outside**, supporting all areas of development.
- **School Values:** Begin teaching children the **school's core values**, encouraging them to embody these values in their daily lives.
  - In **Nursery**, the values taught are: **resilience, respect, kindness, honesty, and responsibility**.
  - In **Reception**, the values extend to include: **gratitude, cooperation, empathy, tolerance, and courage** in addition to those taught in Nursery.
- **Ongoing Staff Development:** Regularly identify training needs for staff to support continuous professional development and enhance the quality of provision.

Through these aims, we ensure that each child at Shalford Infant & Nursery School has the best possible start, with a strong foundation for future learning and personal growth.

## Overarching principles:

There are four overarching principles that shape the teaching and learning 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 can learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.
- 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.

- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

### **The Unique Child**

At **Shalford Infant & Nursery School**, we acknowledge that every child is a **unique individual**, bringing their own personality, interests, and ideas to our learning environment. We understand that each child is a **capable learner**, and we respect the fact that they will develop in **individual ways and at varying rates**. Our approach is tailored to support the individual journey of every child.

By recognizing and valuing the uniqueness of each child, we aim to create an environment where they feel respected, supported, and motivated to explore, learn, and grow at their own pace.

### **Positive Relationships:**

At **Shalford Infant & Nursery School**, we recognise that **trust and mutual respect** form the foundation of effective learning. We are committed to building **caring, supportive, respectful, and professional relationships** with all the children in our care. By fostering these strong bonds, we ensure that each child feels **valued, safe, and listened to**, which is crucial for their emotional well-being and ability to thrive in a learning environment.

We also understand the vital role that a **positive partnership with parents and carers** plays in a child's development. By working closely with families, we create a **collaborative home-school partnership**, which has a profound impact on children's learning, development, and overall success. This open communication and shared responsibility help reinforce the child's experience at school and provide consistency and support in their growth.

In fostering these relationships, we aim to create a **nurturing community** where every child can flourish, both academically and personally.

### **Enabling environment:**

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### **The EYFS Curriculum:**

The **EYFS Curriculum** is organised into seven areas of learning and development that are **interconnected**, providing a holistic approach to early childhood education.

### **The Prime Areas:**

These are fundamental to a child's development and are essential for success in all other areas:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Fostering children's ability to manage emotions, build relationships, and develop self-awareness.

- **Communication and Language:** Supporting children in developing their listening, speaking, and understanding skills.
- **Physical Development:** Encouraging the development of both gross and fine motor skills, promoting health and physical well-being.

### The Specific Areas:

These areas build upon the prime areas and are crucial for developing essential skills:

- **Literacy:** Helping children develop reading and writing skills, including phonics and comprehension.
- **Mathematics:** Introducing children to number concepts, shapes, space, and measures through engaging activities.
- **Understanding the World:** Encouraging exploration and understanding of the world around them, including people, places, technology, and the environment.
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Promoting creativity through art, music, role play, and other expressive activities.

At **Shalford Infant & Nursery School**, we teach all of these areas through four different approaches:

1. **Child-led:** Children access learning independently via **continuous provision**, exploring and engaging with resources without direct support from an adult.
2. **Child-initiated:** When children show an interest or develop their own ideas, adults enhance this learning through **meaningful interactions**, sharing ideas, and providing relevant resources.
3. **Adult-initiated:** An adult presents an engaging idea to the children, then steps back to observe how they interact and respond, allowing for exploration and independence.
4. **Adult-led:** The adult takes the lead with a specific objective in mind, conducting structured activities such as **carpet sessions**, group times, and planned, adult-directed experiences.

This balanced approach ensures that children at Shalford receive a comprehensive and engaging early years education, allowing them to thrive and develop a love for learning.

### Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

Underpinning the seven areas of learning are the three Characteristics of Effecting Teaching and Learning which identify some of the ways in which children learn. Staff will seek to observe, promote and assess these within learning.

**Playing and exploring** – Children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’

- Realise their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them.
- Plan and think ahead about how they will explore and play with objects.
- Guide their own thinking and actions by referring to visual aids or by talking to themselves while playing.
- Make independent choices.
- Bring their own interests and fascinations into their play.
- Respond to new experiences.

**Active Learning** – Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy themselves.

- Participate in routines and begin to predict sequences because they know routines.
- Show goal-directed behaviour.
- Begin to correct their mistakes themselves.
- Keep on trying when things get difficult.

**Creating and thinking critically** – Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

- Take part in simple pretend play.
- Sort materials.
- Review their progress as they try to achieve their goal. Check how well they are doing.

- Solve real problems.
- Use pretend play to think beyond the 'here and now' and to understand another perspective.
- Know more so they feel confident coming up with their own ideas and make more links between those ideas.
- Concentrate on achieving something that is important to them and becoming increasingly able to control their attention and ignore distractions.

**Learning through play and continuous provision in the EYFS:**

“Play is essential for 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.” (‘The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.’ DfE March 2021).

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise essential skills, build on ideas and learn how to work collaboratively with others through understanding and creating rules, sharing and listening to ideas and managing their emotions and behaviour. The children will have the opportunity to think creatively, investigate and problem solve independently and with their peers. Play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength.








**Observation, assessment and planning:**

The planning within the EYFS follows each class’ annual curriculum map which identifies the objectives that are being focused on every term or half term. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for medium term and weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

At Shalford Infant & Nursery School we use ‘OPAL Starting Points’ to identify children’s starting points. This Baseline Assessment is completed within the first six weeks of children joining the setting and it gives information about how the individual has settled, their interests, strengths and next steps based on their most recently passed milestones. This is then shared with parents during the first set of Parent/Teacher consultations. The information that we gather from the ‘OPAL Starting Points’ Assessment also feeds into our weekly planning in Early Years so that we are able to ensure children can further develop their strengths and work on their next steps.

Once the Baseline assessment is completed, each month there will be ‘Spotlight children’ who are approaching their next set of milestones. The staff team will spend time observing these children in their play and learning and an ‘OPAL Spotlight’ is completed at the end of the month which will be focused on supporting the child’s development and identifying what is next for them.

Everyday that we are interacting and engaging with the children in our care, we are carrying out observations that allow us to understand more about where a child is in their development and helps us to build a picture of their skills, knowledge and understanding. At Shalford Infant and Nursery School we have chosen to record these observations on labels that can then be stuck on a child’s individual ‘Record of Observations’ sheet. This allows all staff the chance to record an observation in the moment and share with that child’s Key Person. The observations on labels will always include the date, child’s name and a brief summary of what was observed. They will also have a coloured mark to show which Area of Learning the observation relates to.

| Colour codes for observations and planning        |        |   |
|---|--------|---|
| Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) | Purple |  |
| Communication and Language (C&L)                  | Yellow |  |
| Physical Development (PD)                         | Red    |  |
| Mathematics (M)                                   | Blue   |  |
| Literacy (L)                                      | Green  |  |
| Understanding the World (UoW)                     | Orange |  |
| Expressive Art and Design (EAD)                   | Pink   |  |

In Reception, the children are supported by adult-lead

Independent learning

At the end of the school year, those leaving Nursery and those finishing the Reception Year get a written report sharing their child's learning and progress. In Reception this includes sharing children's achievements against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher. For the children that are remaining in Nursery, we offer another parent/teacher consultation in the Summer term.

### **Inclusion:**

In our school we strongly believe that all children are unique and are valued. We strive to give all of our children every opportunity to achieve regardless of ability, ethnicity, race, culture, religious affiliation, gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. We ensure we take into consideration individual children's life experiences and needs when we are planning their learning.

In the EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the ELGs by the end of the key stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning styles and needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping.
- Inspiring our children to learn from each other and through the whole school community.
- Monitoring children's progress, and providing support from outside agencies as necessary.
- Teaching our school values that encourage respect, tolerance and kindness.

### **Parents as partners:**

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

- Offering home visits to new Nursery children and children who are joining Reception from another setting. We also speak to children's Nursery and Pre-school setting for those starting in Reception year.
- Giving children and families the opportunity to meet their class teacher prior to starting school through Stay and Play sessions.
- Holding 'Meet the Teacher' and 'Curriculum Meetings' to share important information with parents and carers.
- Sharing children's learning through social media posts on 'X'.
- We have an 'Open door policy' where we are happy to meet with parents to discuss their child's learning and any concerns.
- We make ourselves available before and after school at 'pick up' and 'drop off times' for any queries, arranging of meetings and information sharing when needed.
- We hold Parent/Teacher Consultations during the Autumn and Spring term.
- Arranging school events that parents and carers are invited to, such as, Christmas performances, Easter concerts. Sport's day.
- We often invite parent helpers on school trips.
- At the end of each half term in Reception parents are invited in to see their child's Learning Journey folder.
- Holding family learning sessions where parents are invited to see lessons and spend time learning with their child.
- In Reception, teachers and parents leave comments regarding their child's reading.

At our school, the Reception teacher acts as the 'Key Person' for all of the children in their class. In Nursery children are assigned a 'Key Person' and they keep the Class Teacher informed about the learning, development and next steps for their 'Key Children' through regular meetings and conversations.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored by the Head Teacher, The EYFS Lead and the Governing Body, and will be reviewed annually.

### **This Policy links to our Other Policies on:**

- Assessment policy
- Behaviour and anti-bullying policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Equalities policy
- Feedback policy
- Health and safety policy
- Intimate care policy
- Values Policy