

# EYFS Policy

## Devoran School



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## Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year, which at Devoran Primary School, is called the Foundation Stage Class.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing, talking and high quality interactions between staff and children.

## Aims/Objectives

At Devoran Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage':

*'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.'*

## Statutory EYFS Framework

We adhere to the statutory EYFS framework which sets the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.

The framework refers to the following legislation:

- 1) The learning and development requirements are given legal force by an Order<sup>2</sup> made under section 39(1a) of the Childcare Act 2006
- 2) The safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations<sup>3</sup> made under section 39(1b) of the Childcare Act 2006

These are the guiding principles that shape our practice in Foundation Stage:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time;
- children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. importance of **learning and development**;
- children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in the early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

At Devoran School we aim to:

- provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- work in partnership with parents and carers.
- plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for building a foundation to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving, both in the EYFS and beyond. These are the **prime areas**. Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development are the golden threads woven through our everyday provision

Children are also supported through four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The **specific** areas are: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Each child has their individual starting points which we value and recognise. We will ensure that learning in Foundation Stage will be fun, engaging, challenging and supportive of every child. We provide a learning experience that is bespoke to Devoran School and to every unique cohort, based on their needs identified at baseline, emerging trends and our continual gap analysis that supports our planning and provision. We deliver our curriculum through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities based on the EYFS Framework 2021 and our children's interests.

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go.'
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. All planning is continually evaluated to ensure that individual and personalised learning needs are met. Children will engage in whole group and small group guided activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class act as 'co-players' and interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further. As practitioners, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and build these into our provision. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

## Observations and Assessment

### **Baseline**

The statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short, interactive and practical assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. The RBA provides a starting point to measure the progress that schools make with their pupils. At Devoran school we use results from the RBA, alongside information gathered from our rigorous transition process and EYFS practitioner observations, to inform an individual child's baseline.

### **Observations of Play and Learning (OPAL)**

We use an effective method of assessment that ensures all children are supported in reaching significant milestones, as well as working towards their Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of the Foundation Stage. We make meaningful observations that inform our everyday practice and the curriculum. It is through quality interactions with the children, that practitioners gain an insight into the children's thinking, feelings and needs and can plan actions and an environment that provide future possibilities for learning. Our focus is on **observing to understand**. We have robust structures in place to ensure that observations are shared and acted upon effectively. The Early Years Team meet once a week to discuss individual children.

Once our baseline assessments are complete, we prepare a 'starting points' document for each child. This details how they have settled at school and what their current interests are. In response, we provide next steps and strategies for how we intend to support progress towards them. This information is shared with families, who are given the opportunity to add their own observations from home. We place high value on these contributions and believe that building a strong relationship between parents and school, is key to a successful early years' experience.

As well as formal parent/teacher meetings, we use an online platform, 'ClassDojo' as another means of communication and sharing observations of play and learning with our families.

### Reporting Cycle in Foundation Stage

Autumn Term		Spring Term	Summer Term		
September	November	February	May	June	July
Reception Baseline Assessment completed.	OPAL 'Starting Points' completed and sent out to parents.	Parent/Teacher Meetings	Parent/Teacher Meetings to discuss progress towards EYFS Profile	EYFS Profile completed and submitted to county	Final Reports completed and sent out to parents  Transition in to Year One begins.

### The EYFS Profile

OPAL is used to inform termly data collection. Children are recorded as either 'not on track' or 'on track' across all seven areas, according to the evidence gathered. This is reported to the SLT and discussed at termly pupil progress meetings

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than June 30 in that term, the EYFS profile will be completed for each child. The profile provides parents/carers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against levels and their readiness for Year 1. The profile will reflect practitioner's own knowledge and professional judgement of a child to make a 'best fit' judgement.

### Safety including Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Devoran School. We recognise that 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 comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water and milk throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

We are members of the 'Big Brush Club'. A supervised toothbrushing scheme funded the NHS, being delivered to early years settings across the southwest. We aim to reduce children's hospital visits and school absences due to dental issues, reducing pain and disruption for our children and promoting oral health and hygiene.

Class iPads are used to photograph children (for observation and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs. Devoran School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role.

The EYFS staff hold the Paediatric First aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Devoran School. Staff have access to the 'CPOMS' safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

## **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and the Early Learning Goals. We ensure that children working at greater depth are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies.

## **The role of parents/carers**

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways:

- Holding an information evening as soon as their child's place at Devoran School has been confirmed.
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our settling-in sessions and at our home visits, carried out each September.
- Being welcoming and approachable for parents to voice concerns/ask questions.
- Inviting them to a parent consultation in the Spring and Summer Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning.
- Providing curriculum planning overviews for each topic, each term
- Inviting parents to a workshop in the first few weeks of term, to demonstrate how we teach phonics, ensuring children get off to a flying start and families are equipped to best support their child at home.
- Inviting parents to a 'maths' session to demonstrate how we teach maths and support them in developing early number sense at home.
- Providing parents with a written report at the start and end of the year and encouraging their contributions.
- Updating ClassDojo regularly to give families an insight into what their child has been doing during their day at school.

## **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for. We acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory 'settling-in' sessions with their parents/carers, held in the Foundation Stage classroom, to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. Our staff also visit the local nurseries and preschools in return, to familiarise themselves with the children and meet with current keyworkers.

Parents/carers are encouraged to take up the offer of a home visit (by the Foundation Stage teacher and TA). This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have about starting school.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data is sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a number of sessions towards the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom OR with the Year 1 teacher in Foundation Stage to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are 'next year ready'.

## **Monitoring of the EYFS**

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The EYFS Leader is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress. Information is shared with the Headteacher and Foundation Stage team as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the Reception team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

## **Behaviour in the Early Years**

*'Children need to learn how to interact with other people in ways that build and maintain positive relationships. This includes learning how to cooperate, collaborate, negotiate and build rapport. Studies have found that emotionally supportive environments help children interact positively with each other and learn appropriate behaviour'. (Ofsted-Best Start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning December 2023)*

We work consistently to ensure that each child has a strong relationship with the adults in Foundation Stage. In turn we help the children develop a wider network of relationships with their peers and wider staff team. Warm, caring, emotionally-attuned relationships set a very positive climate for children's social and emotional development and help to promote good behaviour.

In Foundation Stage we:

- promote positive behaviour, helping children's social development and emotional wellbeing,
- ensure that all children feel safe and secure at school,
- have consistent expectations and approaches to children's behaviour,
- support children to behave appropriately,
- help children develop an awareness of our expectations and know/learn how to behave appropriately,
- ensure that parents know there is a consistent and fair approach.

All staff will:

- Strive to be "emotionally attuned" to children, valuing and accepting their emotions e.g. "I can see you're sad about that, shall I help you for a moment" rather than "don't cry, you're a big girl now".
- Praise good behaviour
- Praise good efforts
- Show disapproval of the behaviour, not the child e.g. "That was a rude thing to do" not "You rude child".
- Model how to deal with and sort out difficult situations
- Show empathy towards children and each other e.g. "I understand you feel..... but ....." ... "Are you feeling?"

## **Executive Function**

Children need to develop 'inhibitory control' before they can foster positive relationships for example, learning not to take a toy that someone else is playing with. Executive function is a set of cognitive processes that are necessary for controlling behaviour. Playing games and activities can help children to practise exercising behavioural inhibition, such as not interrupting, taking turns or responding to the rules in a game like 'musical statues'.

We will teach the children how to regulate our emotions by finding ways to cope and become confident learners. We will do this by establishing warm, nurturing and responsive relationships with them and providing a safe environment with a consistent routine.

All staff will:

- Be calm and reassuring when helping children manage their emotions.
- Acknowledge and respond to children's feelings, using the words 'comfortable' and 'uncomfortable' to describe emotions rather than 'good' or 'bad'.
- Label feelings and explain why children may be feeling these emotions.
- Use visuals with children which can help them to understand and express what they are feeling.

## **Key boundaries which all staff manage consistently**

This is an overview of some key behaviour boundaries, and not a complete list.

At Devoran School we do not allow:

- Physical hurting – hitting, biting, scratching, pushing

- Emotional hurting – using unkind words against another child, swearing, racist or any other prejudiced comments, mocking another person’s appearance, clothing, home, family, or (dis)ability
- Spitting

Where a child crosses one of these boundaries, staff respond by taking the child away from the incident and saying clearly “there is no [hitting...spitting...swearing...] in our classroom or school. You can’t go back to playing unless you can keep to that rule.” Further actions and responses will depend on the professional judgement of the member of staff. If you are concerned or not sure what to do, please liaise urgently with the EYFS lead or SLT.

### **How Staff Deal with Conflict**

Experiencing and managing conflict is an important part of growing up and early education. Our aim is to help children to learn the skills they need to manage conflicts, through guidance and modelling.

- Encourage children to be assertive and to say/sign “no” clearly, say “I don’t like that”, etc. Where a child appropriately asserts “no” and the other child responds, it is not usually necessary for an adult to get involved.
- Think developmentally: if a child is at an early stage of development, then sharing resources will be very challenging. Ways to support include making sure that we have enough resources for everyone; setting up experiences for 2 or 3 children, to avoid large groups crowding round; model language/approaches like “me next”; “can I have a turn”; “you can have it next, when I’ve finished”.
- Model sharing and learning. Show children that we actively listen to the ideas, needs and wants of others. Show simple approaches to sharing like “I’ll do one, you do the next.”
- Support and promote open-ended experiences that promote collaboration, e.g. blockplay

If a conflict needs adult intervention to be resolved, our approach is:

- To listen to both children.
- To encourage children to say how they feel (“it hurt” ... “I’m sad” etc)
- To ask the children how they could solve the problem and try to find a solution based on their ideas. If necessary, impose a solution and explain why.
- If a child has hurt another, ask them to find a way to help the other child feel better. This could involve saying sorry, comforting the other child or agreeing to be friends. Avoid a situation where a child expresses a grudging “sorry”.
- If a child has been hurt or is distressed, then initially focus attention on that child rather. Deal with the behaviour of the other child next.
- If necessary, state a clear boundary. “Remember, no hitting in Foundation Stage.”
- If necessary move one child away from the other’s play.
- It is important to spend time settling the children back into positive play – don’t deal with an incident and walk away too soon.
- Where possible, notice positive behaviour shortly afterwards and praise it. “I can see you are playing nicely now, that’s good to see you sharing.”

### **Involving parents**

It is important to involve parents because:

- They know their own children best. They may be able to help us to understand why their child is finding a particular situation difficult, and help us to manage it.
- Parents need a clear picture of how their child is managing in school. It is important to talk to parents about difficulties their child might have. But, please be clear that the reason is to share information, and not because we want them to tell their child off again, or because we are blaming them.
- Working with parents to support their child’s positive behaviour is an ongoing and collaborative process that depends on regular and open communication over time.

- We signpost parents to a range of support services and encourage them to join in with these.

### **Sexualised play**

The NSPCC advise that from infancy to 4 years, sexual behaviour is beginning to emerge through actions like:

- kissing and hugging
- showing curiosity about private body parts
- talking about private body parts and using words like poo, willy and bum
- playing "house" or "doctors and nurses" type games with other children
- touching, rubbing or showing off their genitals or masturbating as a comforting habit.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/healthy-sex-ual-behaviour-children-young-people/>

So this type of play should not in itself raise undue concerns. However children do need to learn that this type of play is not appropriate, without being made to feel they have done something bad, wrong or shameful. It is also important that children are empowered to feel confident in saying "no" when they do not like someone else's actions or play. Staff should respond to sexualised play in a low-key and matter-of-fact way, following the general guidance in this policy. Of course, this won't be easy for everyone, especially if the child's behaviour seems shocking or morally wrong to a member of staff. But staff should try to keep calm. Body language and tone can make a difference. If it is important to describe a body part, we use the correct term like a doctor would, not another term. So for example, "penis" rather than "willy". It is important to respond to children's direct questions but not to offer information which the child might not yet be ready to understand. If a member of staff feels any concerns about the play, then they should talk over those concerns – however small – with one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads.

### **Controversial and challenging play**

All sorts of play can pose a dilemma in terms of whether it is children's natural exploratory play or something more concerning. Staff often have to make judgements about the nature of the play and whether they should be supporting and scaffolding it, whether to intervene or whether to observe and report concerns.

### **Weapon play**

It is understood that however we respond to weapon play, we will always ensure that every child feels safe and protected. Children are not allowed to use forms of play to intimidate other children in any way. We are tolerant of weapon play and believe that children should be able to extend their imaginative play in this direction. Staff will join in to support and extend the play, however, we will not actively help them to make weapons as props. We will support them to understand that, while this type of play is harmless, real weapons are not. Any member of staff that does not feel comfortable with weapon play should feel able to express this to children and decline to enter into such play. However, they should make their position clear to the EYFS lead.

### **Positive handling**

With a very young age-group of children, physical holding and guidance are often needed, e.g. when a small child is very angry and about to hit out at other children, or runs to the gate during an unsettled episode whilst settling-in. Staff follow guidance from TeamTeach / PRICE to use safe techniques, which are called 'positive handling'. We judge that an incident is "physical restraint" if the child has to be fully restrained from movement for more than a few seconds because the child wants to hurt another or to hurt her or himself. Restraint is then needed in order to keep the child or other children safe. If a child's behaviour results in a need for restraint, as defined above, then there will be a specific plan to manage behaviour and set clear boundaries. This plan will be drawn up by the EYFS team and with the involvement of the child's parents. External agencies may be included at this point. This plan will outline when restraint is needed and how it is to be implemented. All instances of restraint will be recorded by the EYFS



team and the information will be shared with the parents. We have systems in place for planning this type of behaviour support, recording of instances, and sharing information with parents.