

## Early Years Foundation Stage

This document provides an overview of the policy, philosophy and practice in the EYFS at Netherfield Primary School. It outlines our intentions in the EYFS and how we implement this within our provision.

### EYFS Policy and Philosophy

At Netherfield Primary School Foundation Stage, all teaching staff deliver the EYFS curriculum through high quality teaching and learning in an enriched, enabling environment. Our philosophy is to nurture every child's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, developing their knowledge, skills and confidence as they take their first steps on their own unique journey of lifelong learning.

### Intent

Our intent for our children is to enter the next stage of their education ready to tackle new challenges with confidence and a positive attitude.

We will:

**ENGAGE** our children in a stimulating environment led by the children's interests yet carefully organised and managed by adults; providing a curriculum responsive to individual starting points and needs.

**INNOVATE so that** our children to take the lead in their own learning, encouraging confidence to explore new ideas, think about problems, take risks, make links and seek challenge.

**DEVELOP** high levels of engagement, curiosity, collaboration and cooperation so that children are increasingly adept at managing their own behaviour for learning and in wider social situations.

**RESPECT** children so that they express themselves with confidence in a meaningful way; respecting the opinions and values of themselves and others.

### Implementation

Our approach is influenced by the work of educationalists, researchers, psychologists and practitioners who have guided our knowledge of how young children learn and develop and how adults can support this learning.

Netherfield Primary School EYFS provision is underpinned by a complementary relationship between adult led, adult initiated and child led learning. This changes as children progress through each stage of this phase. We are ambitious in our approach using a continuous cycle of observation and assessment, planning and teaching alongside structures and systematic lessons and guided group work.

### Daily Learning Structure

#### **Shared Input**

Delivered each day covering specific areas of literacy, phonics, maths, Whole Class Reading/Book Talk and Themed Learning following our knowledge and skills progression based on the EYFS Statutory Framework, Netherfield EYFS Curriculum, Netherfield EYFS Essential alongside 'Development Matters 2020' and 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds 2021'.

### **Adult Led Focused Groups**

Short focused groups are planned for Reading, Writing and Maths and follow a shared input. These sessions are planned with care, tailored to meet the needs of the children, using prior knowledge of the children's learning experience and identified next steps.

### **Revisit and Recall**

Each day, children are given the opportunity to revisit prior skills and learning and recall prior knowledge. These are activity based, active and fun. 'Revisit and Recall' is planned around identified needs and formative assessment, to provide the children with the opportunity to practise and apply their knowledge and skills. These take place within adult led sessions and daily challenges within provision.

### **Continuous provision**

Our indoor and outdoor 'Learning Labs' are resourced and organised to develop children's knowledge and skills in personal interaction and exploration and are linked to our current assessment information. Resources are carefully selected to meet the developmental needs of the children in order to enhance potential for new learning and consolidate prior learning. Resources are presented in context to reflect the children's interests and needs – discover, experiment and explore are key themes throughout Learning Labs.

Where appropriate, children are given the freedom to make independent choices and are encouraged to be active learners, taking control of their own learning.

## **Assessment**

Within Continuous Provision our assessment strategy has 3 elements – Observation, Summative Assessment and The Leuven Scale. When children join our EYFS we carry out formative baseline assessments to identify their strengths and areas for development, in order to identify clear next steps.

### **1. Observation**

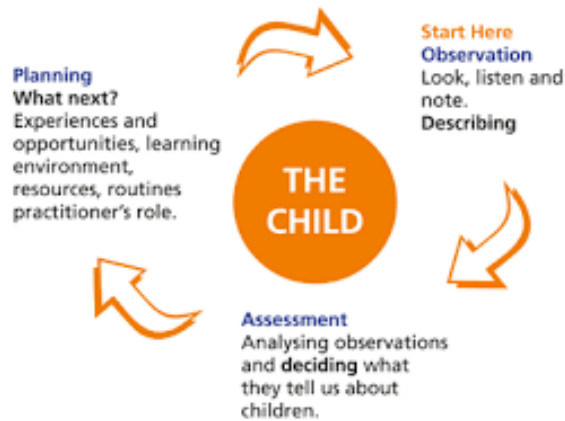
Throughout Continuous Provision observation forms a fundamental aspect of the pedagogy of EYFS at Netherfield Primary School.

Observation and responding to children's thinking inform our planning of experiences and opportunities, how we create our environment to support thinking, the strategies the adults use to extend learning (modelling, scaffolding, questioning, discussion, shared sustained thinking) and how we use our knowledge of children's interests to ensure high levels of engagement.

All adults record 'Wow' moments on Class Dojo – when a child does or says something that demonstrates progress or skill in a particular area of learning.

### **2. Summative Assessments**

In addition to the cycle of observation and formative assessment that informs each child's next steps, summative assessments are carried out for phonics development as well as an assessment of each child's stage of development for each of the 7 areas of learning. These take place termly (Autumn, Spring and Summer) and inform the planning and provision for subsequent teaching and learning.



### 3. The Leuven Scale

Alongside the use of observations and interactions as an assessment tool we also follow the work of Professor Ferre Laevers to understand how focused and comfortable children are in our setting.

The scales of well-being and involvement act as a measure of deep learning and of the effectiveness of the learning environment. This further impacts our planning on order to support us to develop the potential of all our children.

*The 5 point scale measures:*

**Well-being** - feeling at ease, being spontaneous and free of emotional tensions and is crucial to good mental health. This is linked to self-confidence, a good degree of self-esteem and resilience.

**Involvement** - being intensely engaged in activities and is a necessary condition for deep level learning and development.

### The Role of the Adult

Research shows that progress will be significantly enhanced by the effective support and role model of adults within a high-quality learning environment. At Netherfield EYFS the role of the adult particularly during continuous provision is based upon quality interactions and supporting sustained shared thinking. Within our setting interactions between children and adults will look like this:

- Tuning in to what is happening or a child's thinking.
- Showing genuine interest.
- Respecting children's own decisions and choices.
- Inviting children to elaborate.
- Recapping on what has happened so far.
- Offering personal experience.
- Clarifying ideas.
- Reminding.
- Using specific praise e.g. that is a good idea because...
- Offering an alternative viewpoint.
- Speculating/ using 'I wonder if...'

### The Role of the Environment

The importance of each adult to support progression is crucial however, we equally understand that in times when a child is on their own independent learning journey the environment plays a significant role in development.

At Netherfield EYFS each area of the learning environment is informed by what we know about the child and where we know they need to get to. As the needs of the children change, as they grow and develop, so does their learning space. We use resources that are open ended, encourage creativity, imagination and high order thinking skills. For example, the Creative Lab may contain ribbon, lace, pinecones or lolly sticks. Outside role play is deconstructed with access to a wide variety of ever-changing resources. These resources can become anything and have unlimited potential. Our timetable allows for extended uninterrupted periods of continuous provision that allow the children time to reach a deep level of involvement as they engage, play, investigate and talk.

## EYFS Curriculum

Netherfield Primary School EYFS Curriculum is designed with our children at the heart, Our curriculum is based on our knowledge of our children and has been designed to provide them with the opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to fulfil their potential both during their time at Netherfield Primary and beyond.

It is organised into 3 overarching themes -*My World, Our Country and Our Planet* - and is based around quality texts that support each termly learning theme, from our youngest children (2 years old) through to Reception. This gives the children the chance to explore for themselves as individuals as well as their role in society as a whole, in turn preparing them for life beyond Netherfield EYFS.

At Netherfield Primary Foundation Stage we follow the EYFS Framework 2021. Within this framework there are four guiding principles which shape our practice:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. 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.
4. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## EYFS learning and development requirements

Our curriculum encompasses seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving.

These are called the **Prime Areas**:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development.

Four areas help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas.

These are called the **Specific Areas**:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Throughout their time in the EYFS, our children experience an ambitious curriculum which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of Reception goals. These goals are defined as Early Learning Goals (ELGs) alongside our Netherfield EYFS Essentials. These are those components, knowledge and skills, that pupils need to have mastered in order to access the wider curriculum, make sense of and

explore ideas, think critically and creatively and to communicate effectively. They are the essentials that need to be in place so that children's working memory is free to think about big ideas and make connections across and within subject disciplines.

Weaving throughout the EYFS curriculum at Netherfield Primary are three Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- **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
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These elements underpin how we reflect on each child's development and adjust our practice accordingly; supporting children in their individual learning behaviour and observing the context of children's play is essential.

## Reading at Netherfield EYFS

Netherfield Primary is a reading school. We understand the importance reading holds for the future life chances of children and endeavour to build a love of reading in all our children. Our EYFS curriculum is based on quality texts to support this ethos and the children's ongoing development.

### Phonics

Systematic synthetic phonics is taught using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds scheme (2021) and the Phase 1 Letters and Sounds (2007). Whole-class or small group teaching takes place daily. Phase 1 is taught continuously throughout EYFS as children are taught about:

- Environmental sounds
- Instrumental sounds
- Body percussion (e.g. clapping and stamping)
- Rhythm and rhyme
- Alliteration
- Voice sounds
- Oral blending and segmenting (e.g. hearing that d-o-g makes 'dog')

Typical activities for teaching Phase 1 phonics include 'listening' walks, playing and identifying instruments, action songs, learning rhymes and playing games like I Spy. This phase is intended to develop children's listening, vocabulary and speaking skills.

Phase 2 begins when all pupils start Reception. Pupils move through Phase 2, 3 and 4 throughout the year. Every phonics lesson incorporates the teaching of common exception and high frequency words. Beginning in the Nursery, children are taught how to segment words into syllables and then how to segment and blend each syllable using actions (Boogie Blending).

Formative assessment takes place during all phonics lessons, quickly identifying who has and has not understood a new phoneme or grapheme or common exception word, informing future planning.

Summative assessment takes place termly in Reception for all children. Knowledge of each sound is checked, as well as the child being able to apply this when reading words. Pupils who are making slow progress are identified quickly and intervention is put into place, alongside the usual phonics teaching. Each phonics session is around 20 minutes in duration and follows a teaching sequence which is implemented throughout the school ensuring a smooth transition to Key Stage One.

### Shared exploration of language

At Netherfield EYFS, we believe the key to success in reading is communication. Research clearly shows that the level of development in language and communication is the greatest predictor of success in later life. Within the EYFS, Communication and Language development is a prime area of learning. At school children use language to build strong relationships, communicate their ideas and their feelings, think creatively and critically and as a tool for learning and to become confident with the written word. The

development of a young child's communication and language comes primarily from tuning in to conversations that are meaningful to the child. The preparation for all aspects of written language develops through one to one conversation with a responsive adult. Alongside quality interactions, rich and varied experiences ensure language provides the foundation of thinking and learning.

Improving young children's vocabulary is paramount. Exploring and extending pupils' vocabulary is part of everyday teaching. Lessons are planned to enrich vocabulary and incidental opportunities are exploited. Vocabulary is discussed with the intention of building background knowledge so pupils can comprehend the content of a text. Our EYFS learning environments have vocabulary displays which are used, referred to and added to in partnership with the children. All staff discuss the etymology and morphology of words in Whole class Reading (Reception) and Book Talk sessions (Nursery), and across the curriculum, to establish links to spelling.

### Whole Class Reading

Texts are shared as a whole class daily within Whole Class Reading and Book Talk sessions, Themed Guided Learning time and Story Time. These shared reading times are a recognised strategy for teaching reading in which pupils and their teacher read a text together with a focus on a specific aspect. Through experiencing a variety of texts, fiction and non-fiction, children will become aware of the range of strategies required when reading for different purposes.

### Reading Groups

Each child takes part in an adult led, group reading sessions three times a week. These sessions focus on GPC and Word Reading, Prosody and Comprehension. In our Reading groups children read their Little Wandle reading books, which are carefully chosen by staff to match the phonemes pupils are learning or about to learn. Learning tasks and activities are planned to practise reading of common exception and high frequency words, phonics and reading for enjoyment.

### Wider reading

**Reading Together** We aim to read to children multiple times within a day at school, in addition to books provided for home reading. We share books with children for many reasons: enjoying stories together, linking with personal experiences, vocabulary building, developing imagination and language, learning about books. Listening to stories being read and re-read helps children to gain insights into meaning and story structure.

**Individual reading** This encourages reading for pleasure as part of our school vision, to create readers for life. All children have their own individual reading books; one Little Wandle phonetically decodable and one 'Reading for Pleasure' book. Children are supported to select books from a wide range of genres including picture books, non-fiction information books and poetry. Reading progress is monitored and class reading challenges are frequently set.

## Writing at Netherfield EYFS

### Mark making

Mark making and speech provide children with powerful tools for thinking, reasoning and problem solving. Time, space and attention is given to children's mark making, mathematical graphics, drawing and writing experiences. Throughout each day, children have opportunities for spontaneous mark making, drawing and writing in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Resources are carefully chosen, well organised and attractively presented, so that the children can decide independently how they want to represent their ideas and which medium would best suit their purpose. High value is placed upon imagination, ideas and self-expression demonstrated by the children, these are reflected by the adults and used as starting points for planning.

### Message Centre

The Message Centre is an innovative concept designed to transform early writing, reading and maths. Created by Greg Bottrill, author of 'Can I Go And Play Now' and 'School and the Magic of Children', the Message Centre has huge potential to unlock the joy of being a mark maker. The message centre encourages mark making and symbol writing. The symbols can be anything, making the children believe that they can use writing to express and communicate from the very earliest starting point. Each of our EYFS learning environments have an indoor and outdoor Message Centre to encourage and support children to develop their early writing skills

### Writing opportunities

Children write daily both during adult led and child initiate learning times. This takes place during phonics sessions, Write Away sessions (modelled writing), focus group writing and within the Learning Labs.

**Handwriting** development in our EYFS includes a wide variety of activities planned to develop the fine motor skills required for the correct pencil grip. 'Funky Finger' activities may include threading, using tweezers, dough gym, spiders in jelly, cardboard weaving.

The letters are introduced in line with our phonics teaching and handwriting taught each week, along with many other opportunities throughout continuous provision, to enable the children to practise the correct letter formation and improve fluency.

**Write Away sessions** enable teachers to model the writing process, incorporating the phonetic knowledge children have at the point of teaching. These sessions support the children to orally generate and rehearse their own sentences (messages) and practise their segmenting skills using their individual phonics knowledge, in preparation for independent writing.

**Small focus group** writing sessions takes place daily. These adult-led sessions are planned using in response to children's individual next steps. Stimuli are carefully chosen by staff to match the phonemes pupils are learning or about to learn. Learning tasks and activities are planned to practise writing words, captions and sentences eventually building up to extended pieces of writing.

**Phonics Writing** enables children to practise writing the phonemes and words that they have been learning within their Little Wandle phonics lessons.

**Independent Writing** opportunities take place regularly to enable children to practise their writing skills and support our ongoing assessments. These are planned using our knowledge of the children's writing skills and next steps and provide children with a specific writing task.

**Individual Provision writing** encourages writing for a purpose or for pleasure. Invitations to write are incorporate into each Learning Lab to enhance the children's learning experience and provide real life contexts for writing. If needed, staff will guide pupils in their recording to support them to embed their writing skills or achieve their next steps.

### Maths

As practitioners we know that there is more to maths than counting! Children learn about maths through play and their daily experiences. And the more meaningful to them and hands on it is, the better. Our setting is full of mathematical opportunities for children to explore, sort, compare, count, calculate and describe. Providing a safe environment to be creative, critical thinkers, problem solvers and to have a go. Mathematics is identified as one of the specific areas of learning, alongside expressive arts and design, literacy, and understanding the world. Our aim is to ensure that all children develop firm mathematical foundations in a way that is engaging, and appropriate for their age. This means actively learning using resources and activities provided in the environment. In addition, maths is explicitly taught daily as short whole class sessions and followed up with small group work within the environment.

### Concrete – Pictorial – Abstract

Mastery of mathematical concepts in the EYFS takes the following approach:

- **Concrete** – children use concrete objects and manipulatives to help them understand what they are doing.
- **Pictorial** – children build on this concrete approach by using pictorial representations. These representations can then be used to reason and solve problems.

- **Abstract** – with the foundations firmly laid, children move to an abstract approach using numbers and key concepts with confidence.

### Maths within the environment

Learning Lab provision is regularly adapted to meet the children's needs and next steps. Children are encouraged to develop their mathematical skills and knowledge both through independent child-initiated learning and adult interactions alongside the children within our provision.

This can take many shapes and form, for example:

**Sand & Water** can develop mathematical concepts and language, e.g. heavy, light, empty, full, big, little.

Malleable – dough can develop mathematical language – short, long, fat, thin. Children can make shapes of different dimensions – flat shapes, 3-d shapes.

**Imaginative play** - set the table for dinner can develop counting skills. Sorting clothes into different colours, or different types of clothes, e.g. t-shirts and socks will develop knowledge of shapes and colours.

**Physical play** can develop fine motor skills e.g. Sorting out a jigsaw, threading beads. Block play or playing with toy cars can help to develop sequencing according to size, colour. Playing with different sized blocks can help to develop an understanding of weight and dimensions. Tidying toys allows children to sort into different sizes and colours. It can also develop mathematical language – first, second, third, how many are blue, which is largest / smallest.

**Outdoors** – Children may plant seeds this can develop understanding of time and the life cycle of plants. As the plants grow children use measures and develop mathematical language of size.

**Books & Rhymes** - Enjoying stories and rhymes with a mathematical element, e.g. "One-two buckle my shoe" can develop number concepts, knowing direction that the print reads from left to right.

### Parent Engagement

Parents are the first and most important influence on their child's development and future outcomes. The impact on a child's education is greater if parents and schools work in partnership. At Netherfield, parents are invited to be involved in every step of a child's journey in education. Beginning with a pre- starting school meeting, followed up with home visits/calls and the invitation for their child to attend 'transition' sessions before the Autumn term commences. We use an online learning journal, 'Class Dojo' to record, track and celebrate progress made by each child. Class Dojo enhances this special time in a child's life and captures children's experiences as well as monitors development and learning. Text, images and videos can be uploaded by parents to share learning and experiences from home via PC, tablet or our mobile app. Every entry helps to create a complete story of a child's time at school. We pride ourselves on building positive relationships with our Netherfield families. Creating a 'triangle of trust' (Elfer et al.) between children, parents and practitioners. We understand that when parents relinquish part of the care and teaching of their child to the staff in our setting it is a big step. We create an environment that is conducive to interactions where all feelings can be valued. A warm welcome each day often leads to a deeper knowledge and understanding of each child and their family.

### Impact

The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children transitioning into Year 1.

We aim for all of our children to leave the EYFS with a Good Level of Development (GLD) and ready to enter Key Stage One ready to begin the next chapter of the educational journey. We measure progress and children's learning across the year through formative and summative assessment which are based on the teacher's knowledge of the child, their learning journeys, photographs and videos on recorded Class Dojo. We aim to exceed the National and Local Authority data for children achieving a Good Level of Development. The judgements of our school are moderated with other schools within the Minster EYFS Network. This means judgements are secure and consistent with government guidelines.



The teaching and pedagogy are reviewed and evaluated through team meetings with Year 1. We ensure that the areas we discuss and develop are reflected in changes and developments in our daily practice.

The Early Years provision features in all areas of the School Development Plan and has a rigorous plan for development each year. This is monitored and evaluated by the EYFS Lead, the Head Teacher and designated EYFS Link Governor Catherine Wilson.

In 2017, a 'Study of Early Education and Development: Good Practice in Early Education' was published which outlined 3 themes that underpin effective practice that are aligned with our ethos and development. At Netherfield we;

1. Tailor practice to the needs of the children - the child is at the centre of our practice. We have a clear vision of what we want to achieve for the children in our care, and these clear goals inform all areas of our practice.

2. Invest in skilled and experienced staff - that support children to reach their full potential.

3. Operate an open and reflective culture – our culture is driven by continuous improvement.

We seek out other settings and professionals and work as part of a local EYFS Network to learn from, share and reflect on practice. We recognise the knowledge and expertise of our own staff and value open discussion and staff consultation; and embedded within our school is a culture of self-evaluation as a means of driving continuous improvement.

Ultimately, we continually strive to provide our children with the wealth of experiences, knowledge and skills they require to become the very best version of themselves and move onto the next stage of their lives equipped to achieve their full potential.

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