

# Glynwood Community Primary School

## Early Years Policy 2024-25



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## Early Years Policy

### Curriculum Intent

Within the Early Years Foundation Stage at Glynwood we strive to ensure all children have developed a high level of skills across all areas of learning, equipping them appropriately for the rest of their school life. Our child-centred, play based approach within the Early Years allows each child to flourish into confident and independent individuals.

Early Years practitioners within our school have a solid understanding of the Early Years Curriculum and understand how best to build upon and personalise this for each child. Staff are proactive and passionate about building upon their current knowledge and skills in order to enhance the Early Years experience and to provide the highest quality of learning for all pupils.

All aspects of the Early Years Curriculum are inherently linked. Our stimulating environment provides many exciting opportunities for children to develop their skills across prime and specific areas of learning. Our Early Years curriculum supports children's ideas and interests in a very individual way. The characteristics of effective learning are at the heart of our Early Years curriculum. They highlight the importance of playing and learning, active learning and thinking critically. We strive to provide experiences and opportunities which allow children to develop and master these skills.

At this school we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop emotionally, socially, physically, creatively, and intellectually to their full potential and at their own pace. Each child is unique and is valued as an individual.

### Aims

At Glynwood we aim to provide a warm and friendly environment where everyone is valued equally and has respect for others.

We believe that the environment must support the whole child. It must encompass a schedule, framework and daily routine so that each child can reach their full potential.

The agreed Early Years Policy sets out to offer a safe and secure environment that will encourage the child to take the fullest advantage of a wide range of presented opportunities and experiences through an extensive and sensitively introduced curriculum.

The Foundation Stage should not be regarded solely as a preparation for the rest of school life, but as valid, exciting and important in its own right.

As a school we follow a set of core values and these form an integral part of our school and Early Years ethos. These values are:

Resilience  
Excellence  
Support  
Pride  
Engagement  
Creativity  
Teamwork

### Audience and Purpose

This policy will be used for:

- discussion and reference by staff
- guidance for newly appointed and temporary staff

- information for parents
- discussion by governors
- reference for inspectors and advisors
- monitoring by the headteacher and management team

## **Objectives**

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, which meets the individual needs and interests of the children. This environment aims to be both creative and stimulating.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- To provide a high quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage profile and the Birth-5 Matters document.
- For the children to become aware of moral and social values.
- To encourage active learning through first hand experiences both in indoor and outdoor play, and through both verbal and non-verbal communication.
- To encourage children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.
- To value the cultural diversity within our school and community.
- To foster positive home school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.
- To ensure assessment procedures are carried out effectively, to inform of individual progress throughout the Foundation Stage.
- To organise space, resources and materials to support independent learning.
- To ensure a smooth transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1.
- To develop a team approach to Early Years education in which all adults are responsible and their expertise valued and respected.
- To support children in understanding their own emotions and to use a restorative approach to solving conflicts.

## **Admissions**

At Glynwood Primary School we believe that the provision offered prior to admission and the induction procedure are very important to children, families and staff. Entering school is a very special time in a child's life and should therefore be a gradual process that responds to individual needs.

Places in Nursery and Reception are allocated according to the Gateshead LEA agreed policy.

Parents and carers are invited to a Nursery/Reception intake meeting where they can meet the Headteacher and Early Years staff. A booklet is distributed, basic procedures are explained and philosophy discussed. There is also opportunity given to chat informally to staff and ask any questions.

Parents/carers who are unable to attend are offered the opportunity to meet the Headteacher and staff at another convenient time. Parents/carers who do not respond are sent all the relevant information by post.

Prior to admission to Nursery all parents/carers are offered a home visit to enable staff to meet the child in their own home and chat informally to parents/carers. These visits take place during the first week in September. Parents of children who begin Nursery in January are offered a Stay and Play session instead of a home visit.

Children are admitted to Nursery on a staggered basis, beginning with a home visit offered to parents/carers during the first week of term followed by a 2 week staggered start. Morning/Afternoon session children will be attending their full entitlement by the end of the second week, with 30 hours children attending their full entitlement by the end of the third week. Nursery can cater for individuals if they are struggling to settle.

Children are admitted to Reception on a staggered basis and are introduced to full-time hours by the beginning of their second week.

## Transition Arrangements

Our aim is to establish a smooth and successful transition to school. This is facilitated by an admissions procedure which is:

- home/school friendly
- takes into account the previous experiences and starting point of each child
- acknowledges the parents/carers role as the child's first educator
- encourages parents/carers to continue to be involved in their child's education and develop an effective partnership with school

Transition arrangements for children from Nursery to Reception within school are arranged by the Early Years staff during the Summer term. Arrangements include: Nursery children working in Reception with their new staff, Nursery children visiting the Reception classes with their familiar Nursery staff, Reception staff reading stories to Nursery children, Nursery children visiting other parts of the school including the yard, PE hall and dinner hall.

Reception to Year 1 transition:

This is a very important transition and every effort is made by staff to ensure that it is successful for every child. Arrangements include: Reception children meeting Year 1 staff during whole school activities throughout their Reception year, Reception children visiting their new classroom and teacher for sessions during the Summer term, individual EYFS tracking and assessment information is passed on and discussed with Year 1 staff, Early Learning Goals are discussed with Year 1 staff, during the Autumn term elements of the EYFS are maintained for continuity and Year 1 staff value the importance of a practical, play-based curriculum.

## Teaching and Learning

### The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The content of the curriculum within the Foundation Stage is set out within the National Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework document. At Glynwood we use Birth-5 matters as supporting guidance for the framework. Guidance is given on effective learning and teaching through these areas:

The **Prime Areas** of Learning and Development are:

- \*Personal and Emotional Development
- \*Physical Development
- \*Communication and Language

The **Specific Areas** of Learning and Development are:

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

Within each of these areas of learning there are statements which show the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need to acquire during the Foundation stage in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of their Reception Year.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning move through all seven of these areas of learning and underpin all that is offered within the Early Years environment.

Interpreting the Early Years curriculum into classroom practice involves an integrated approach to learning using a multi disciplinary range of activities to develop the skills required.

The activities involve the child in a range of situations including group, individual, familiar and new and take into account the need for diversity, relevance and meaning for the child.

Our curriculum is underpinned by the following core values: learning right from wrong, learning to take turns and share, challenging negative attitudes and stereotypes, freedom of ideas and choice (child initiated curriculum), good manners, tolerance and respect for ourselves and others, the importance of family (involving parents/carers in their child's education), helping others equality and the importance of healthcare.

## Planning

**“Well planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process”** (Curriculum guidance for foundation Stage)

Planning for young children should reflect that all areas of learning are interrelated and that one activity may have outcomes drawn from across the prime and specific curriculum areas. The planning formats we use have been designed to reflect this. Early Years staff use a reflective approach to planning and take part in daily reflection discussions within their class teams. These discussions form the basis of planning for individuals and groups of children as well as for enhancements to classroom areas. All members of the team are involved in these discussions and planning processes. The supporting document 'Birth-5 matters' informs our medium term, skills based planning which is done on a termly basis. This considers the unique child (what a child might be doing), positive relationships (what adults might do) and enabling environments (what adults might provide). Staff also plan for adult led small group sessions including phonics, maths, 1:1 reading, and PE. In Reception the schemes we follow are Read Write Inc., White Rose Maths and Get Set 4 PE. We also use Talk 4 Writing strategies within our Reception classes. Children are also involved in the planning of their own learning through the plan, do, review cycle followed within our Early Years Classrooms.

## Positive Relationships

**“children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.”**  
(Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021)

**“Warm, trusting relationships with knowledgeable adults supports children's learning more effectively than any amount of resources.”** (Birth to 5 matters)

Practitioners should establish a rapport with children through positive interactions. They should carefully observe and tune into the child's actions and communications in order to be able to consider what the child is learning and thinking about. Staff should use high levels of questioning which lead to open ended and purposeful conversations with children. Staff are skilled at knowing when to interact or intervene and when to stand back and watch the actions of the child.

## The Learning Environment

**“Children are unique and holistic learners, thriving within environments that support their individual and diverse motivations, interests and needs. Enabling environments offer children security, comfort, engagement and opportunity.”** (Birth to 5 matters)

**“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.”**  
(Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021)

The layout of both Reception and Nursery classrooms is designed to encourage children to make choices and to develop independence by having well organised equipment and materials readily available. The classroom layouts also give children the space they need for their activities while encouraging them to initiate their own learning.

We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence.

Enhancements are planned for both the indoor and outdoor environments. We value the importance of outdoor learning and specific sessions are planned to ensure that children are engaging in purposeful learning experiences. The indoor learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas, such as: role play, book corner, writing and maths areas, the studio, play dough, sand, water, construction, small world and jigsaws. These areas are carefully arranged to accommodate quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

Children are encouraged to become autonomous learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. This is done through the plan, do, review cycle which is followed in our early years classrooms. This approach to learning equips children with the skills they need to become independent thinkers and allows them to reflect on their learning on a daily basis.

Staff aim to provide a learning environment which both stimulates and supports children's learning. The effectiveness of the environment is regularly reviewed and improved.

### **Learning Through Play**

**“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”** (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021)

**“Play and self-initiated activities are ideal opportunities to build Characteristics of Effective Learning.”**  
(Birth to 5 Matters)

In the Early Years at Glynwood we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through play activities, and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by acting as play partners, by using higher order questioning and through sustained shared thinking.

### **Play policy**

We believe that play, both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. Play can be enjoyed and challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to,

- \*Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world
- \*Practise and build up concepts, ideas and skills
- \*Learn how to control impulses and understand the need for rules
- \*Take risks and make mistakes
- \*Think creatively and imaginatively
- \*Communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems
- \*Express fears to relieve anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- \*Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment
- \*Supporting children's learning through planned play
- \*Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- \*Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.

- \*Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning.
- \*Narrating children's play.
- \*Asking open-ended questions about children's play.

## **Assessment**

**"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support."**

**"When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence."** (Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021)

## **Foundation Stage Profile**

The EYFS Profile requires practitioners to assess children against a set of 17 early learning goals (ELGs). Practitioners should use their judgement to decide whether children have met each ELG or whether their level of attainment is below the level described by the ELGs. This will result in a judgement of expected or emerging for each child. This judgement is made at the end of the Reception year.

All staff constantly observe learning and achievement and make relevant anecdotal observations. These observations, samples of work, photographic evidence, practitioner knowledge and parental knowledge are then used to complete the Foundation Stage and Early Years Profile.

Staff work alongside one another to ensure a consistent and moderated approach to assessment.

Individual online learning journals of evidence are updated by staff and are available for monitoring by the Headteacher/management team. They are also used to support discussions with parents/carers. Staff are responsible for updating the journals but also meet together to moderate all judgements made.

Nursery and Reception staff complete baseline assessments within the first five or six weeks of a child entering the setting and update data on a termly basis. Data is analysed and acted upon in order for all children to achieve their full potential.

Reception staff also complete the National Baseline for all children in their classes within the first 6 weeks of the school year.

Our Early Years teams engage in daily reflection times which consider pupil progress, adaptations to the classroom environment and interventions which may need to be put into place. These discussions inform half termly updates to the Tapestry 'Concerns' page and support judgements that staff make about which developmental range individual children are working at.

## **Reporting to Parents/Carers**

Parents/Carers are able to access their child's online learning journal using their own account which is set up at the beginning of their child's early years journey in our school. Parents/Carers are given opportunities to visit school to discuss their child's progress at Parental Consultation meetings twice a year.

A written Record of Achievement is given to parents/carers in the Summer term.

## **Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs**

We ensure all children feel included and supported by working in an anti-discriminatory way. We regularly monitor our provision to ensure every child's learning is well supported and builds on children's own home, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We use materials, equipment and displays which reflect the home languages, cultural and ethnic diversity of the children, the local community and wider world. We ensure that bilingual children have access

to the full curriculum and are involved in all the learning experiences offered giving the extra support needed so that they can participate and understand. Children will be learning English through real life, everyday, meaningful experiences and through interacting with other children and staff.

It is important to identify those children who find some areas of learning more difficult so that strategies to help them can be put in place as soon as possible. These children will have an individualised support plan which is written by the teacher in consultation with the parent and SEN coordinator. This will be reviewed regularly as the child progresses. SEN children have access to the full curriculum and are involved in all the learning experiences. Extra support is also available if required. Children identified in Nursery or Reception with specific needs will be referred to the school SENCO who will offer advice regarding extra support required. Children can be referred for a range of support from outside agencies such as speech and language therapy, HINT, EYAIT, occupational therapy and educational psychologists if parents and staff feel it is necessary.

## **Personal Hygiene and Contenance**

**Context :** Achieving personal hygiene is identified as a developmental milestone/learning statement in The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (Personal, Social and Emotional Development: Managing Self). For many children this is reached within the home environment. However, as with all developmental milestones, children will achieve these at different times and some children could still be working towards this on entering Nursery/Reception. It is important to note that such a delay is not necessarily linked with learning difficulties.

**Our Commitment :** At Glynwood we provide an inclusive environment which supports all children who have not yet achieved their personal hygiene developmental milestone. We will deal with personal hygiene developmental needs on an individual basis and will make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of the child. By doing this, all children are able to participate in all areas of learning during the Nursery and Reception session/school day.

**Working with Parents/Carers :** It should not be assumed that a child has not achieved full continence because the parents/carers have not supported their child at home. A delay may be linked with delays in other aspects of the child's development and will benefit from a planned programme worked out in partnership with the child's parents/carers. Parents/carers will be supported by the school and offered the opportunity to have support at home through services offered by the Health Visitor/School Nurse. Parents/carers of children who are ready for toilet training will be asked to provide pull-ups rather than nappies for their child. Staff will support children in building up their independence by changing them standing up rather than lying down on a changing mat and encouraging them to pull their clothing up and down themselves.

### **Health and Safety :**

1. Staff will wear disposable gloves and aprons when dealing with an incontinence incident.
2. Staff will sit on a chair to support and guide children through changing themselves when appropriate.
3. Hot water and soap are available to wash hands before and after the task is undertaken
4. Paper towels are available for drying hands
5. Soiled nappies/pull-ups will be wrapped for disposal and placed in the bins in the bathrooms.
6. Soiled underwear will be double wrapped in plastic bags and made available to the child's parent/carer at the end of the Nursery session/school day
7. Changing area and mat will be cleaned after each use
8. A record will be made of all incontinence incidents and parents/carers will be informed.

Children's personal care needs will be supported by staff who have enhanced DBS checks. In the Early Years it will be a familiar staff member (which may include lunchtime supervisors) who helps to change or toilet a child. This will be done in a supportive way and the child's dignity and privacy will be maintained. Staff will report any undue distress in a child, or other concerns, to the designated senior staff member, according to school Child Protection procedures.

## **Establishing Positive Partnerships with Parents/Carers**



We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- outlining the Foundation Stage curriculum to parents/carers within the intake booklet given out in the Summer term, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home
- sending home a weekly news update, informing parents/carers of the learning that has taken place at school and any reminders/upcoming events.
- operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- sending home library books and appropriate reading material which supports the curriculum and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- encouraging parents to add their own observations to their child's online learning journal (tapestry)
- discussing individual targets with parents/carers at parental consultation meetings (informed by the EYFS Profile)
- providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals
- making parents/carers feel welcome
- maintaining frequent informal communication through newsletters and noticeboards
- inviting parents/carers to open days and special events
- inviting parents/carers to take part in any Family Learning programmes which may be on offer
- encouraging parents/carers to attend our stay and play sessions.

This policy was updated by S.Hancock with the support of the Early Years Team in October 2024 and will continue to be reviewed on a yearly basis.