



The Sunflower Federation

EYFS

Policy

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(Due to be reviewed 2026)

Emma Gritton _____

Chair of Governors

Merja Paakkonen _____

Head teacher

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At the Sunflower Federation, children can start their education following their second birthday subject to having a statement of special educational needs and dependent upon places being available.

EYFS Core Offer

We enable our students to build secure trusting relationships with staff so they feel happy, settled and confident to explore and learn at school. We promote a 'can do' attitude and aim to instil confidence in our children to try new things.

We know our children in depth and promote them as individuals; we gain a deep understanding of each child, we discover our students' individual likes, strengths, and areas for development. By establishing positive relationships and an understanding of each child, we support our students to be engaged, motivated and begin to think for themselves during their learning and play.

Developing attention, engagement, social interaction, communication, choice making, thinking, cooperation and independence skills are key to building a successful learning career at school. We provide these essential building blocks for continued lifelong learning.

With a rotation of either half termly or termly topics depending on the class cohort, we deliver a broad and balanced range of adult led and child-initiated learning opportunities, covering all 7 areas of learning and development.

We value the importance of parent partnerships; clear and consistent communication between home and school leads to more positive outcomes for our students.

Our Aims

A unique child

"Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured."

Each child's individuality is celebrated and respected. We help our children discover their likes, promote communication skills, enable them to make choices and encourage their independence. We provide an individually tailored curriculum to meet each child's individual needs, level of development and special interests. Every child will have curriculum targets reflecting their individual needs and supporting their EHCP targets, as well as individual communication, sensory integration, physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes where relevant. We use approaches, such as objects of reference, picture cues, ELKLAN (a training tool to support children with speech and language needs), Picture Exchange Communication Systems (PECS) and Makaton to develop our children's communication skills.

Positive relationships

"Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships."

We strive to build sensitive, supportive and secure relationships to enable our children to feel safe, secure and ready to learn and explore their environment. We use intensive interaction techniques to build relationships between staff and children, as well as developing 'people play' skills, such as playing ready steady go games and peek a boo.

A key worker system allows for children to build trusting relationships based on initial positive attachments. Additionally, this system allows adults to gain a greater awareness of a child's individual needs - enabling richer understanding and input into observations. Key workers input into planning and support in the sharing of individual children's information with staff and home.

Enabling environment

“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 carers.”

We place great importance on our children's learning space, ensuring equal access for all. We have established clear, distinct areas of learning both indoors and outdoors to help children discover their likes, build their independence and exploratory skills. Children are encouraged to locate their chosen play areas and help select appropriate play resources, using their preferred modes of communication. Children are also encouraged to develop their play skills beyond our classrooms, using environments around the school, such as the soft play room, sensory garden, and playground.

Areas of learning and development

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum covers 7 areas of learning and development. We provide a broad and balanced range of adult led lessons and child-initiated play. Children learn to play and learn during structured 'learning to play' sessions. Each child's play is assessed and supported through small and achievable steps so they develop play and learning skills. Play is encouraged through people play, physical play, sensory play, object play and pretend play. Children's interests are used to engage and extend their child-initiated play. We develop children's ability to engage in their environment, become motivated to learn and eventually think of their own ideas in play.

Our Commitment – Principle of the EYFS

<u>A unique child</u>	<u>Positive relationships</u>	<u>Enabling Environments</u>	<u>Learning and Development</u>
<p>Child Development Our students develop in individual ways and at varying rates. When a child begins school a baseline assessment using teacher judgement and relevant reference documents (SOLAR: Birth to 5 Matters, Routes for Learning, My Independence, Reception Baseline Assessment, Early Years Outcomes) is completed and individual targets are set to meet their individual learning needs.</p> <p>Inclusive Practice All children are included and accepted no matter their protected characteristics or learning needs.</p> <p>Keeping Safe All children are kept safe within a secure learning environment, with trained adults who will support them with their learning, care and pastoral needs. All staff have up to date DBS checks. Children learn and develop within clear boundaries; they are supported in their behaviour and are helped to play safely.</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Children's health is closely monitored by trained staff; we have a full-time school nurse and individual care plans for children with additional medical needs. Classroom practitioners are trained, e.g. in the management of epilepsy, supporting children with gastrostomies, basic paediatric first aid.</p>	<p>Respecting Each Other All staff work collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team, consisting of the physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and the school nurse. Staff work well together as part of a team and model appropriate ways of interacting and communicating with each other.</p> <p>Parents as Partners Clear communication pathways between teacher and parents through daily reports in home school diaries, posts on Class Dojo, telephone consultations, target setting and annual review meetings. Home support is also offered for families that request it, consisting of a home visit and advice on strategies.</p> <p>Supporting Learning Staff-child interactions and the development of relationships is an important prerequisite to learning. Each member of the class team knows each child's individual learning needs and styles, personal interests and family background. Children are supported to develop positive relationships, to feel safe, secure and happy at school.</p> <p>Key Person Due to the small class size and high adult: child ratio, key workers are provided on a daily basis, so that the children have the continuity of a special person throughout the day and that they get the opportunity to be supported by each member of the class team throughout the week. This secures the team's knowledge of each individual child in class.</p>	<p>Observation, Assessment & Planning Children are continually observed, and their learning is assessed and reflected upon within class team meetings. Observations and children's interests, learning styles and progress towards EHCP outcomes are used to inform planning. Children are assessed on the Early Years Outcomes and Birth to 5 Matters guidance as a reference point for smaller steps, and SOLAR –EYFS pathway, once they reach Year one, the assessment transfers to SOLAR Breakspere Pathway 2 or Routes for Learning depending on children's learning needs.</p> <p>Supporting Every Child Each child is supported in their learning and development through a well-balanced timetable of child-initiated learning where practitioners observe then scaffold play to build on and extend their interests as well as feeding into adult directed tasks that focus on progress towards their EHCP outcomes.</p> <p>The Learning Environment The children have access to secure indoor and outdoor learning environments with distinct areas of play and learning to encourage their choice making and experiences. Areas of development and play are accessible to all with the help of object cues and choosing boards to support individual communication needs.</p> <p>The Wider Context We work well as part of a multidisciplinary team; we have achieved the HQS Gold award to ensure the quality and effectiveness of our early years provision.</p>	<p>Play & Exploration Each child is supported in their play, at each stage of their development. Play is encouraged and enhanced through adult: child interactions as well as promoting playing alongside and with peers. Information from home also supports in providing motivating activities and ideas to promote interests and extend play and learning.</p> <p>Active Learning Sensory approaches to play and learning, enable children to be active and involved in a rich breadth of activities and develop resources to stimulate and excite children to learn. Adults are the best resource, so strong and successful adult:child interactions are the basis for successful play and learning to occur.</p> <p>Creativity and Critical Thinking Making links and connections, we use a topic-based approach to our curriculum. As well as introducing topic areas, the curriculum is also built upon the children's interests, which are observed in child-initiated learning.</p> <p>Areas of Learning and Development Our curriculum delivery ensures equal coverage of the 7 areas of learning and development, these areas of learning are well planned for, using child observations as well as a secure understanding of the stage of development the children are at, to encourage progression and success towards their EHCP outcomes.</p>

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

Three prime areas:

Communication and language – Children learn to develop their listening, attention, understanding and speaking skills. Communication is promoted using children’s preferred communication styles, e.g. speech, PECS using symbols or photos, communication books, iPad grid player, Makaton signing, object cues, gestures and facial expression.

Communication skills are developed through daily greeting time, snack time and child-initiated play with access to literacy activities through their continuous play provision: reading area, songs and music, IT. Child initiated play (learning to play sessions) focus on developing children’s choice making skills and communication skills as well as social communication skills.

Personal social and emotional development – Children learn to develop their confidence and independence skills, they develop their social interaction skills, build relationships with staff and children, learn to accept adult direction, cooperate and share. We teach our children to express and understand their emotions and help them discover strategies to help them cope with their emotions.

Opportunities to develop these skills are built into daily routines, such as greeting time, snack time, toileting, child-initiated play (learning to play) and cross curricular links with other areas of learning. Children are taught to play alongside, share and play with their peers. Children have weekly soft play sessions to develop their social interaction skills with adults and/or peers. Intensive interaction sessions are used to develop children’s awareness of others and to help build relationships. Children are taught to understand emotions, through the use of mirrors, photo books, symbols and social stories, which is incorporated where relevant throughout the school day. Children’s PSED individual priority targets are incorporated into planning for adult directed sessions. Children are supported, where necessary with individual behavior support plans to help them cooperate, behave and develop independence skills. Close liaison with parents ensures the development of toilet training programmes when relevant as well as the development of self-help skills.

Physical development – All children have weekly PE lessons delivered by our specialist PE teacher, they also have weekly hydrotherapy sessions. Children have access to physiotherapy and occupational therapy depending on their needs, as well as individual sensory integration programmes. Some children have rebound therapy. Children develop their physical skills through the outdoor continuous play provision, as well as the large playground spaces at playtimes. Pupils are assessed on their sensory needs and supported with personalised sensory regulation programs through the school day. Pupils also have access to activities to support their sensory diet and regular movement breaks are inbuilt in pupils’ timetables depending on individual needs. Children also learn to develop their self-care skills, such as learning to feed themselves, aid in the dressing process and become toilet trained where appropriate.

Four specific areas:

Literacy – Children have access to a reading area in the classroom. Children are supported to develop their interest and love of reading through sensory story sessions and book sharing activities. We also deliver an adult led reading lesson each week, with a story focus, and teach reading skills, such as attending, looking, listening, anticipating, matching, symbol and word recognition,. Where relevant, children have access to reading schemes and learn phonics using our Little Wandle programme. Children also develop their fine motor skills and writing, by learning to produce marks in a range of messy media, progressing to using tools to produce pre-writing and letter shapes.

Mathematics – children have access to a range of play resources to encourage the teaching of mathematical concepts, such as water and sand play, construction, puzzles and counting songs on the

computer. Children have weekly adult led maths lessons. Children learn to understand and experience mathematical concepts first hand in a range of play contexts.

Understanding the World – Children learn to explore the world around them through a range of experiences in the classroom and outside.

The World - This is encouraged throughout the school day: learning about the concept of time by following a timetable of activities, developing their ability to remember and reflect by reviewing their choices and learning during learning to play sessions.

Children are learning to navigate their immediate environment with key locations within their own classroom and learn where the different areas of learning are as well as the locations of places around the school.

They are encouraged to develop their curiosity, exploration and investigation skills through topics of interest where they study the world around them.

Technology - As well as specific timetabled sessions to teach IT skills, children are also provided with opportunities to develop IT skills through cross-curricular links with Communication and Language and Literacy e.g. using the Interactive White Board for mark making and Mathematics by using maths programs to consolidate their learning. They have access to IT in our continuous play provision by being offered choices, such as computers (including touch screen), iPad, IWB, remote control toys, and switch equipment. Individual IT priority targets are taught explicitly during adult directed sessions.

People and Communities – Children learn to make relationships with adults and their peers and learn about different cultures and religions within their Understanding the World and RE lessons. People and communities learning links with the half-termly/termly topic and we celebrate a broad range of cultural events as a whole-school.

Expressive arts and design – Children are supported to express themselves creatively through exploring and using media and materials. This area of development is covered through weekly music lessons, adult led art lessons, singing and circle time sessions, and opportunities to dress up and explore role play and small world toys within both adult led and child led activities. This area also links with the development of mark making and pre-writing skills, through the exploration of media, such as chalks, paint, and shaving foam. Pupils also have opportunities to attend Music therapy sessions depending on their individual needs.

Example EYFS Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.45 - 9.30	Maths – Morning Learning	PSED Soft Play/Life Skills	Literacy - Morning Learning	Maths - Morning Learning	PSED - Morning Learning – Turn-taking
9.30 – 9.50	C&L - Circle time				
9.50 – 10.20	Maths Shape, Space and Measure	C&L Circle Time	PD PE	Maths Number	UTW RE <i>(2 students horse riding)</i>
10.20 – 10.35	PD - Movement Break				
10.35 – 10.50	C&L - Snack				
10.50 – 11.05	Literacy Circle Time – Sensory Story	PD Dough Disco	EAD Music 10.45 – 11.05	PD Rebound	C&L Attention Autism – Bucket
11.05 – 11.50	Literacy Reading Target Activities	Literacy Writing	UTW Eco Learning/Science	Literacy Phonics/See and Learn	EAD - Art/D&T
11.50 – 12.00	Literacy - Book Sharing				
12.00 - 12.45	PSED - Lunch and Personal care				
12.45 – 1.30	PSED - Independence skills and Leisure skills				
13.30 – 13.45	C&L Afternoon Circle (Thursday – Sing and Sign Assembly)				
13.45 – 14.35	C&L Learning to Play	Maths Number Songs	UTW Technology	EARLY FINISH	PSED – Tarpac/Zones of Regulation
	PD Swimming	PD Swimming			PSED - Assembly 2.45
14.35 – 14.50	PSED - Independence & Life Skills- Preparing for home/toileting				
14.50 – 15.15	PSED - Plenary/Reflection- 'What a star' and Goodbye in Hall				

Long Term Topic Cycle Example for Phase 1

	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Year 1	Music	Traditional Tales	Animals
Year 2	All About Me (Aut 1) People Who are important to us. (Aut 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My senses, my body, my body parts. • My family. • My self-esteem. • My emotions, my behaviour. • People who help us-mum, dad, nurse, teacher. 	Our Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My immediate environment, class, school, local community – map of the school, town. • Animal and their habitats. • The Earth – ecology. How do we look after our environment, <u>recycling</u>. • The World – countries, cultures. 	Seaside/Under the Sea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water habitat. • See animals. • See plants. • Holidays by the sea. • Water play. • Staying safe in the sun.
Year 3	Food	Transport	Weather

Year 2 Long Term Plan	All About Me People Who Help Us	Our Environment	Seaside/Under the Sea
Literacy	Reading Example Texts Here are my hands. by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault I like myself by Karen Beaumont Leo the Late Bloomer by Robert Kraus ABC, I Like Me! Or I Like Me By Nancy Carlson It's Okay to be Different by Todd Parr	Reading Example Texts The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle Jasper's Beanstalk by Nick Butterworth 'Walking in the Jungle' – Barefoot Books Jazzy in the Jungle by Lucy Cousins	Reading Example Texts The Rainbow Fish A House for Hermit Crab by Eric Carle Barefoot Books – Portside Pirates Commotion In The Ocean by

1

Topics to be reviewed depending on children's interests.

	What I Like About Me by Allia Zobel-Nolan and MIKI SAKAMOTO Oh I've got a body! By Bambini Lingo@ , English learning for kids, Learn body parts, action songs.	Recycling is Fun by Charles Ghigna & Ag Jatkowska	Giles Andrae Smiley Shark by Ruth Galloway
PSED	Circle time, greeting, snack, child initiated play, behaviour support, toilet training, cross curricular links, special celebrations, religious celebrations.		
PD	Gross motor development through child initiated play, playtime on the big playground, cross curricular links, soft play, sensory play, sensory circuit, hydrotherapy, OT programmes, physiotherapy, Rebound, PE		
Numeracy	Number SSM - Size	Number SSM – Time and Sequencing	Number SSM - Colour - Number SSM - Shape - Number SSM - Capacity - Number SSM - Position
Understanding the World	People – all about me	People – people who help us, people who are important to us	The World – countries - habitats, The World – animals in the sea - People – mermaids, pirates, fisherman, sailors
Technology	Technology	Technology	Technology - Technology
Expressive Arts and Design	Choosing and using different materials. Exploring sensory materials. Face painting, hand and foot prints.	Sculpture, 3D modelling.	Painting – marbling (<i>to make sea</i>), natural materials (<i>e.g. sea shells</i>) Cutting and sticking – collage.

Child Initiated Learning

The EYFS requires practitioners to ensure a balance of child-initiated and adult-led play based activities.

“Play underpins the delivery of all of the EYFS.”

At the Sunflower Federation all children have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors.

Children have opportunities to consolidate, develop and extend their learning through child-initiated activities. The daily timetable allows time for child-initiated learning (learning to play).

“Play and playfulness are shared across all cultural groups”.

Therefore resources are developed to reflect cultural differences. We ensure that resources are accessible, well organised and of high quality. They need to be relevant to each child and made accessible regardless of their level of development e.g. offering children a choice of activities through symbols, photos or objects. There is a culture within the Sunflower Federation of developing children's independence and choice.

Fundamentally important to enabling child-initiated opportunities is ensuring that there is an 'Enabling Environment'. Children need different levels of support in order to engage and extend their learning. A holistic approach covering all seven areas of learning through play will ensure that children have every opportunity to succeed.

Support

All children need different levels of support in order to engage and extend their learning. The role of the Teachers and Learning Support Assistants as Early years practitioners during this time is to ensure the following:

A unique child

- To know and understand each individual child; their level of development, their barriers to learning and their interests.

Positive relationships

- To help children achieve close, caring and respectful relationships with all class staff and provide continuity through daily key workers.
- To help children to develop their awareness of their peers and their ability to share resources and play alongside each other.
- To support children to resolve their own conflicts through problem solving.

Enabling environments

- To facilitate daily 'learning to play' sessions which provide child-initiated learning opportunities.
- To maintain clear, distinct areas of learning both indoors and outdoors.
- To establish a balance between adult/child interactions and children's independent play, depending on children's level of development.
- To scaffold children's learning through talk, suggesting new ways of playing and modelling approaches.

Learning and development

- To support children's involvement in class routines e.g. tidy up time.
- To ensure a breadth of resources that are appropriate to children's individual needs and interests.
- To provide firsthand experiences to encourage children to explore and discover through all their senses.
- To encourage and support children to persevere and to problem solve.
- To allow children the space to try things out, make mistakes, try something else, repeat their play and consolidate their ideas.
- To identify and support next steps in learning.

Observation and assessment

The child-initiated learning time should also include time for observation, assessment and reflection. Adults will:

- Observe children as a natural part of all normal activities.
- Interpret children's actions and attempts to communicate moment by moment, in order to understand the child's thinking, learning and interests.
- Complete observations and assessments for children on a regular basis.
- Take note of children's interests to help scaffold their play and provide opportunities to enhance play in these areas.
- Use recorded observations to inform focused learning opportunities and to help with planning next steps in supporting the child's learning.

Thinking about how our children learn.

During adult led lessons, child-initiated play and class routines, we observe and reflect on how our children are learning. There are three characteristics of effective learning

Playing and exploring – Engagement

Children use their senses to 'have a go', explore and experience the world around them. They develop particular interests and begin to initiate activities.

Active learning – Motivation

Children develop their attention and concentration skills, learn to persist with their learning and begin to be proud of their achievements, e.g. responding to positive praise at well done time.

Creating and thinking critically – Thinking

Children begin to develop problem solving skills, they think of their own ideas, make links between ideas, and begin to plan and make decisions.

Assessment

Within the first half term of the child starting school, the following assessments will be implemented:

Children who are nursery/reception age:

- Teacher judgement through observations and interacting with children, with the revised Development Matters (March 2021), and Birth to 5 Matters guidance document as a reference point for smaller steps; to support with assessing where children are and what they need to learn and progress, throughout EYFS. Reception age children undertake the Reception Baseline Assessment as appropriate. The characteristics of effective learning underpins the EYFS. EYFS profiles at the end of Reception assessed against the Early Learning Goals.
- Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) short assessment taken within first 6 weeks in which child starts reception (as appropriate).
- Assessment at the end of EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) in the final term of the year in which child reaches age five. The profile provides parents and carers and teachers with well-rounded knowledge, understanding and abilities, pupil's attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for SEND children are made as appropriate. Children who are Year 1 and above, are assessed in the appropriate pathway of the curriculum for the school they attend using SOLAR to record this.

Children have a Pupil Profile, Personal Care Plan (PCP) and a Communication Passport which indicates their individual educational needs, their barriers to learning, their likes, dislikes, how they communicate and the level of support that is needed for personal care regimes.

Characteristic of effective learning

Playing and exploring – engagement:	Active learning – motivation:	Creating and thinking critically – thinking:
Finding out and exploring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing curiosity about objects, events and people • Using senses to explore the world around them • Engaging in open-ended activity • Showing particular interests 	Being involved and concentrating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time • Showing high levels of energy, fascination • Not easily distracted • Paying attention to details 	Having their own ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking of ideas • Finding ways to solve problems • Finding new ways to do things
Playing with what they know <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretending objects are things from their experience • Representing their experiences in play • Taking on a role in their play • Acting out experiences with other people 	Keeping on trying <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persisting with activity when challenges occur • Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off • Bouncing back after difficulties 	Making links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making links and noticing patterns in their experience • Making predictions • Testing their ideas • Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect
Being willing to 'have a go' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiating activities • Seeking challenge • Showing a 'can do' attitude • Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error 	Enjoying achieving what they set out to do <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals • Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result • Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise 	Choosing ways to do things <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal • Checking how well their activities are going • Changing strategy as needed • Reviewing how well the approach worked

By the end of the child's first half term at school, initial targets will be set in all 7 areas of learning and will be discussed with the child's parent/carer in a target setting meeting.

In addition, sensory assessment will be conducted as needed and a sensory profile developed depending on pupils' individual needs. All pupils are also supported with developing their confidence and behavior management skills and relevant assessment will be conducted to develop individual behavior plans when necessary.

School Induction

Prior to the new pupil starting school, the class teacher will conduct a home visit or a visit to the child's previous educational setting to find out key information needed to help the transition to school (complete home visit record sheet, collect any relevant reports or assessments from the previous educational setting, including latest EHCP)

Each new pupil will be given opportunities to visit school in advance and individual arrangement for transition and settlement will be developed. A gradual transition timetable will be agreed by the class teacher and parent/carer. Pupils will be accompanied by their parent/carer for their first session in school.

The pupil will gradually participate in group time and structured classroom routines. The class team will focus on building trusting relationships, learning about pupils' individual interests and learning styles. Teachers will establish a hierarchy of motivating activities and assess communication needs. Pupils are also assessed by the speech and language therapist, physio therapist and occupational therapist depending on their individual needs indicated in EHCP.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make to their child's education.

Prior to a child starting at a Sunflower Federation School , we offer a home visit where the class teacher and/or Phase 1 Leader gather more information about the child and explain what support the school is able to offer (see home visit policy).

Maintaining contact with parents once their child starts school is vital, particularly when the child travels to and from school by transport. We maintain contact through the home-school book / sound buttons / phone calls / text messages/Class Dojo. Parents are invited into school to discuss their child's progress and support during settlement phase. Parents are invited to parents' meetings and Annual Review meetings. In addition, there are less formal events such as the Christmas play to which parents are invited.