



Early Years

Subject Lead: Mrs Ana Ashmore



Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage focuses on four overarching principles that *every child is unique*, children learn to be strong and independent through *positive relationships*, children learn and develop well in an *enabling environment* and *children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates*, at Sheldwich we hold these values at the very heart of everything we do and fully meet the requirements of the educational programme in relation to the seven areas of *Learning and Development*:

- Communication
- Personal, Social, Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

and the *Characteristics of Effective Learning*:

- Playing and Exploring: *engagement*
- Active Learning: *motivation*
- Creating and Thinking Critically: *thinking*

Acknowledging that “Young children learn by doing. Knowledge is not something that is given to children as though they were empty vessels to be filled. Children acquire knowledge about the physical and social worlds in which they live through playful interaction with objects and people. They are motivated by their own desire to make sense of their world. For children to understand fully and remember what they have learned the information must be meaningful to the child in context of the child's experience and development.” (Bredekamp ed. 1990). Our intention within the Early Years at Sheldwich is to:

- Welcome children into a positive, secure and stimulating environment, where they feel valued, loved as individuals and develop in confidence and independence as part of a wider whole school family.
- Work in partnership with parents.
- Provide an exciting curriculum based around the children’s learning and development needs, interest, seasons, festivals and cultural events.
- Focus on the Prime Areas and the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics, as we believe they are the gatekeepers for successful learning across all other subjects.

Implementation

At Sheldwich we implement our intention by having a carefully planned fluid timetable which provides

- **Daily Teacher Led** Phonics, Shared Stories, Writing / Fine Motor Skill development and Mathematics lessons. Enhanced with P.E. in the hall, visits to the School Library, ITC Suite and Cooking activities.
- **Daily Child Initiated time** as believe that Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play that is scaffolded by adults thus developing ‘sustained shared thinking’ *“an episode in which two or more individuals ‘work together’ in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept, evaluate*

activities, extend a narrative etc. Both parties must contribute to the thinking, and it must develop and extend” Siraj-Blatchford et al (2002) Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY), DfES.

- **Connection to the Wider school** community is forged through setting the rules and expectations early on for behaviour in the school and participation in whole school events and celebrations such as Book, Art, STEM, Sports, Music, Science and RE weeks.
- **The Learning Environment** both inside and outside of the classroom is carefully organised to enable children to develop and demonstrate *the characteristics of effective learning*.
- **The Routine** of the day is planned to develop new skills and provide positive learning opportunities.
- **Parents** are acknowledged as children’s first and most important teachers. We work in partnership in the Foundation Stage, encouraging parents’ involvement and providing advice, and support on how learning can be reinforced and developed at home.
- **Healthy Living** and the factors that support a healthy lifestyle, including, drinking plenty of water, a balanced diet, oral hygiene routines the importance of regular exercise are encouraged.
- **Well-Being** is a priority at Sheldwich we carefully consider the classes emotional environment and use Ferra Leavers well-being & Involvement levels to support children. Pupils have access to the class ‘Coping Wheel’ to help them develop self-regulation strategies and resilience to face challenges and ‘Feelings Fan’ to support them in understanding their own and others feelings. Pupils also enjoy a range of ‘Fantastic Friday’ activities as we believe happy children flourish academically, physically, and socially.
- **Self-help and independence** is developed as children are encouraged to be self-sufficient and do things for themselves, adopting the ‘Growth Mindset’ of ‘I cannot do it yet’.
- **‘Harmony’** aspects of Interdependence, Diversity, Adaptation, Geometry, Health and Oneness further support our teaching and enrich our Foundation stage curriculum.
- **Transition** to Sheldwich is bespoke to the unique child’s needs we: liaise with Pre-Schools, meet parents/carers, arrange home visits, and run weekly transition group throughout the year, to ensure the child feels happy and confident in their new environment.
- **Natural World** knowledge is developed as pupils study the seasons, grow vegetables/ herbs and pick berries. Pupils meet a range of animals including Tortoises, Sheep, Chameleons and Chickens. Pupils develop an understanding of life Cycles through sharing the Hungry Caterpillar story and observing the process from caterpillar to butterfly firsthand.
- **People, Culture and Communities** We fully utilize the local community and rural environment enjoying seasonal visits to the woods and outings to the Village to the Bonfire, Christmas Tree, Post Box, Church War Memorial, and an annual visit to Canterbury Cathedral.
Pupils take part in charitable campaigns: collecting for the Food Bank at Harvest time, Poppy Day, Children in Need, Sponsored PTFA Fun Runs.
Diversity tolerance and respect for others and their beliefs is promoted as children are encouraged to think about their uniqueness and feel good about themselves. Each child’s family heritage is acknowledged and used to put events/celebrations into an appropriate frame of context EG: Black History Month, Diwali, and St Andrews Day, as we invite families in to share their knowledge and experiences
- **Past and Present** knowledge is developed through sharing stories and listening to personal accounts, capturing the child’s voice.

Impact

As a result, you will see:

- Happy engaged children who are all challenged.
- Confident children who demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning:

- Exciting Lessons that support to children's needs encourage their interests, that utilise a variety of resources to develop learning and add challenge.
- Creative learning that is tracked and monitored by the Teacher and Key Persons that ensures all children make at least good progress.
- Resilient Children who are ready to make the transition to Reception Class / Year 1.
- Positive Partnership's with Parents.
- Good levels of Well-being and involvement.
- Our use of Early Years Pupil Premium where applicable, ensures we provide additional support and experiences to the most disadvantaged children in our care.

Assessment

Observations and assessments are kept in an individual child's Learning Journey, this is available for parents to read and to contribute to through 'Good News' slips.

- On entry to Sheldwich parents / pupils complete 'All about me' forms.
- 'On entry' starting points are established by key persons.
- All Reception children receive a Baseline Assessment
- Integrated 2-year-old developmental check are carried out with parents and are formally recorded in children's 'Personal Child Health Record' (Red Book).
- Formative Assessment observations either written, photographic or orally – with teachers / Key Persons using their professional judgement are carried out on a daily basis.
- Termly summative assessments establish a child's: Learning and Development Progress, Needs, Interests, Next Steps, Levels of Well-being & Involvement and Characteristics of Effective Learning are carried out on a termly basis through Statutory Supervisions and Pupil Progress meetings.
- All Reception children take part in the Nuffield Language Screening Program.
- Twice a year parents receive Progress / Unique Story Reports.
- In term 6 Reception year children's progress is shared with parents through a summary based on the statutory EYFS profile consisting of the 17 Early Learning Goals and the three Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Resources

- We value and invest in an extensive range of open-ended resources that provide children with limitless opportunities for play and learning.