



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Beamish and Pelton Federation of Schools

EYFS Policy

Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile - Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Beamish Pelton Federation children are admitted to reception in the September following their fourth birthday on a phased induction, following transition visits in the Summer Term. At Pelton Community Primary School, we have provision for a 2-year-old Nursery room, A 3/4-year-old Nursery room and 2 Reception classes. At Beamish we have a Foundation Stage unit with children aged 3-5 years. Within our foundation stages we have a wealth of experienced and qualified Early Years Practitioners (whom are paediatric first aid trained).

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Beamish Pelton Federation we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

That said, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Beamish Pelton Federation, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and next steps and helping each child to progress. We will use a variety of assessment methods including ongoing and more formalised observations and the use of the Tapestry assessment tool.
- Focus heavily on Baseline the children as they first arrive in our EYFS to ensure we get their starting point right. This will be kept in a clearly identified section of the child's journal to allow progress to be measured from their early starting points. This baseline will also take into account any other records we receive from previous pre-school settings, parents and childminders.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

A Unique Child

At Beamish Pelton Federation we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. Children are also influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, and show and tell, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. The children are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school and every child matters. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at Beamish Pelton Federation are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We do not group children based on notions of fixed ability. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning and weekly child initiated planning

sessions, this helps towards building a picture of every child's needs. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs & Disability policy. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests and develop their self-esteem and confidence through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Keeping children safe in school child protection within safeguarding policy and nurture policy)

Positive Relationships

At Beamish Pelton Federation we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We strive to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts our school at our stay and play sessions and induction meetings;
- inviting the children to spend time, a number of sessions, with their teacher in the classroom before starting at school;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations, and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Providing a handbook of information about commencing Nursery and Reception at Pelton Community and Beamish
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings in the first two terms to discuss their child's settling in and progress

- operating an open door policy for parents / carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents/carers to discuss them.
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- encouraging parents to contribute observations in home reader / homework book
- sending home 'wow voucher' slips designed to enable parents to record outstanding achievements.
- Sharing the children's 'Learning Journal' at stay and play sessions with parents/carers and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers.
- sharing our approach to reading, encouraging parents to attend a reading meeting at the beginning of the Autumn Term
- Inviting parents to sign up to class dojo to keep up to date with relevant and immediate learning/reminders/messages and to encourage dialogue
- publishing a topic web on the website and sending a copy home, detailing the areas of learning and the overarching theme of the half-term. Including top tips of ideas for helping at home
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc.
- Offering opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning e.g. hearing readers.

Supporting Learning and Key Person

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. In our school every child is designated a 'key person', providing each child the reassurance to feel safe and cared for whilst building a relationship with their parents.

The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children. We have strong links with Health Visitors and work together to support any needs identified. We also hold Integrated Review meetings in our setting for our two year olds with Health Visitors, Parents/carers and Early Years Practitioners.

Enabling Environments

At Beamish Pelton Federation we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning during periods of continuous provision with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Observations - Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's Learning Journeys. These observations are undertaken by teachers and teaching assistants and are recorded in a variety of forms in the children's individual learning journals. They also contain information provided by parents and other settings.

Planning within the EYFS starts with the Long Term Curriculum Overview in conjunction with KS1 and the school's topics. Medium Term Plans are written termly, using objectives from the Development Matters document, and used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning. However the EYFS staff may alter these MTP's in response to the observations current interests and achievements of the children, ensuring that learning supports individual needs. This is indicated on weekly planning and shared with all EYFS staff. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths and reading directed teaching. However, planning, which is based upon a different topic which is identified as vehicle of interest to deliver the children's next steps in learning, also therefore responds to the needs, achievement and interest of the children. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children. Objective led planning is used in the Nursery room to enable us to deliver the curriculum by taking objectives into children's play where we see higher levels of engagement thus a more successful delivery of the intended objective.

Assessment - During the first few weeks in Nursery and Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a variety of baseline activities and observations to determine their starting points. We then derive next step targets from these assessments to help progress the children forward. A baseline test (CEM) is carried out for each Reception child. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps progress records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work. These progress books contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be just working towards, comfortably working within or securely working within the Development Matters age-bands.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

At Beamish Pelton Federation, we record judgements in reading, writing and number against the EYFS Profile each term. These show the stage that each child has reached at a given point and show the progress they have made.

Learning and Development

At Beamish Pelton Federation we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources

independently. The EYFS have their own enclosed outdoor area which the two's can access, however they have an extra secluded space to help them feel safe from the busy foundation garden. This has a positive effect on the children's development. We are also a Forest School. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

Areas of Learning

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

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

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Reception pupils also participate in daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Letters & Sounds" document and in line with school policy.

Play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas respecting space when needed. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better

at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.'

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest,

offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Staff will report on the child's COEL in 'settling in' reports and at the end of Reception

Teaching & Learning Styles

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Reception – Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child’s new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to

- To go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Purchase uniform and book bag if requested
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in to reception

New class sessions - The children new to Pelton Community School are given opportunities to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. Parents are invited to stay initially to chat to the class teacher and by the second/third session we hope they feel comfortable enough to be left for the session. Existing Nursery children will have opportunities to attend their new Reception classes for at least 3 transition sessions during the summer term. Nursery and reception already share the same outdoor space which can help greatly during this time of transition.

This means that before they join their new class the Reception environment is already a familiar place to them.

Arrangements are also made for the children’s new class teacher/foundation stage leader to visit them in their current nursery setting.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1) - Throughout the Reception year, each child’s involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children (in the Summer Term).

Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend an afternoon in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding & Welfare

‘Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.’

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Beamish Pelton Federation, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;

- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

*We carry out risk assessment regularly within the EYFS learning environments, both inside and outside and systems are in place for reporting maintenance requirements.

*We follow health and safety guidelines and ensure risk assessments are carried out for all activities. Risk assessments are displayed and/or written on planning formats.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Keeping children safe in school child protection within safeguarding policy).

Good Health

Beamish Pelton Federation offer a wide choice of fruit, vegetable snacks and milk are offered. Children have access to water at all times. On entry to the school parents are involved in informing about allergies or special dietary requirements, copies are forwarded and recorded to the appropriate school staff. A whole school approach is taken towards safeguarding a child from any specific allergy he/she may be at risk from i.e. wasp sting. The whole school is aware of qualified first aid trained staff. Prescribed medicine is only given once a form has been filled out. First Aid kits are available in the classrooms, main entrance and school office. On school trips, a qualified 'first aider' always attends (please refer to the whole school trip policy for further details).

Intimate Care - "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Nursery and Reception Pelton Community (see intimate care policy).

Behaviour:

Rewards/Positive reinforcement

Here at Beamish Pelton Federation, we have adopted the restorative approach to behaviour, we find the most effective way of encouraging our children to display excellent behaviour, is through challenging yet achievable targets and appropriate resources that attract the individual child's interest and rate of development. We ensure this through ongoing observation, assessment and individual target setting, which feed into our daily/individual plans.

Throughout each child's time in the EYFS, they will have some form of responsibility, monitor job or helper role. We believe that by giving the children a chance to take on small responsibilities for themselves, even if it is hanging up their own coat, buttoning up their shirt, remembering to wash their own hands or something more responsible like being responsible for helping cut up and hand out the snack for the other children (*'Special Helper'*), that these deserve positive reinforcement. We also believe that through extra responsibility the children learn how important it is to display good behaviour and exposes them to the importance of themselves keeping safe.

Our children also respond very well to positive reinforcement, they love to receive stickers, a smile and verbal praise, public praise in front of the class, a chance to look after our class friends "bears" and a clap from their friends.

Our positive behaviour policy forms the friendly, secure and welcoming atmosphere, that we are so proud of here at Beamish Pelton Federation. However, we do realise that sometimes this is not enough for some children on the odd occasion, therefore we have a sanctions system set in place that all members of staff including mid-day supervisors can adopt when necessary.

Sanctions

Stage 1 – **Rainbow** –if they have been extremely good.

Stage 2 – **Sunshine** (starting point)

Stage 3 – **Rain cloud** (one warning)

Stage 4 – **Thunder Cloud-Time out/ Missed play** for 2 minutes for every offence their after, which is deemed appropriate.

(At Stage 4 - Parent informed that their child, continued to demonstrate poor behaviour after named moved twice, 4 discussions and 4 warnings)

Children's names are always on the sunshine, if negative behaviour is displayed the child is quietly taken to one side and a discussion follows, the child is asked why their actions may not be appropriate behaviour, if they are not sure this is explained to them. The child then has the opportunity to explain what they think would be appropriate behaviour or actions. They are encouraged to demonstrate these and possibly examples of why it is not appropriate behaviour are explained to reinforce the point.

This process will happen at each stage of the sanctions process. Each cloud has a one warning limit.

Very serious incidents can move directly to the thunder cloud (stage 4), if the child poses a serious danger or threat to themselves or another person. On occasion such as this, it may need intervention by Mrs Telfer or Mrs Henry, to ensure the well being of all children and staff and return the atmosphere to a secure happy one once more.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We welcome children and their families/carers regardless of gender, religion and ethnicity. It is our intention to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to be fully included into school life. Our Nursery is open to every family in the community, subject to availability of places.

SEN and Inclusion

We fully support inclusion and aim to do our best to cater for children's individual needs. Support for individual pupils is determined by Durham Local Authority. Our school offer for SEN can be viewed on the school website.

Meetings/visits with any outside agencies supporting the child and his/her family may be organised to share information and outline next steps for provision for a child.

Student Support Plans are written and reviewed regularly for children identified as having additional needs in any/all areas of development.

Access to an Outreach supported nursery place will be arranged with County Hall. Once County Hall has requested outreach support, the Headteacher and key person will make at least one, often more visits to the child's home. Parents are then invited to bring their child to the Nursery for introductory visits (see SEN policy)

Monitoring and Review of all Policies

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The head teacher will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and raise any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and Head of Early Years will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Rachel Henry EYFS lead

September 2017

To be reviewed: September 2019 or as necessary

