



SPARKEN HILL
ACADEMY

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Based on Worksop Family of Schools Policy

Version	Prepared by	Reviewed Date	Reviewed by	Next Review Date	Comments
1.1	RTL	02/02/2026	F&P	Feb 2028	Updated with EYFS Statutory Framework 2025

Workshop Family of Schools

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



WORKSHOP FAMILY OF SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT

"To make a positive contribution to improving & broadening outcomes & opportunities for all children in Workshop through consistent, united, collaboration which both supports and challenges"

The Aims of the EYFS

Every child within the Workshop Family of Schools is entitled to the best possible start in their school life, being supported to achieve to their full potential.

As a family of schools we aim to support each child's welfare and their developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop at different rates.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where all children feel happy and valued.
- Encouraging children's independence both physically and within decision making.
- Developing the children's understanding of values and behaviour expectations for people to work together in harmony.
- Supporting children in developing care and respect for others, which includes those with beliefs and cultures that are different than their own.
- Providing learning experiences through play that encourage children's curiosity and develop their desire and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences that build on the children's interests and their existing knowledge and understanding, in order to challenge and stimulate the children's development.
- Giving children the opportunities to engage in a range of environments both inside and outside.

Sparken Hill Academy

What is the EYFS?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to all children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Sparken Hill Academy the children begin Foundation Stage 1 (Nursery) the term after they reach their third birthday. They can attend our F1 setting for 5 morning sessions or 5 afternoon sessions each week (this can sometimes be referred to as 15 hours entitlement.) We also offer 30 hours provision in F1 for our working parents who have the applicable code to access this facility.

They join Foundation Stage 2 (Reception) in the academic year they turn 5. Applications are processed by Notts CC and are separate to Sparken Hill Academy.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child** – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- **Positive relationships** – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- **Enabling environments** – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- **Learning and developing** – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

The Unique Child

At Sparken Hill Academy we want every child to develop into an independent learner who can be resilient, confident, self-motivated and successful. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their early experiences at school. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the EYFS. All children at Sparken Hill Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all

social and cultural backgrounds and children of different ethnic groups.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, using Development Matters as our base for these.
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- promoting independence.
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- continually monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Positive Relationships

At Sparken Hill Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first educators and it is with them they spend the majority of their time. We value the contribution they make.

We develop these links through:

- giving children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting Foundation Stage with extended transition periods being offered should the child require this.
- inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- offering an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries.
- encouraging parents/carers to bring their child into school each morning.
- providing regular meetings for parents/carers to discuss their child's achievements. Parents/carers receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that parents/carers can join in, e.g. celebrations at the end of topics.
- Parents/carers from feeder settings ie playgroups are invited to stay and play sessions within our setting in the term(s) before they start school to ensure a smooth transition.
- Little Sparklers' Playgroup runs monthly with parents and children encouraged to attend to build an awareness and security around the school building, staff and routines.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children and their families, interacting positively and taking time to listen to them.

You may be used to your child having a 'Key Person' to them individually but in FS2 the teachers act as 'Key Person' to the children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

In FS1/Nursery the teacher and teaching assistant act as 'Key Person' for a group of children each.

Learning and Development

At our school 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 inter-connected. As a school we are able to claim EYFSP and you may be able to support us with this if you claim any from the list below:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- Guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

We can use the extra funding in a variety of ways to ensure we improve the quality of the early years' education that we provide for your child. This could include for example additional training for our staff on early language, investing in partnership working with our colleagues in the area to further our expertise or supporting our staff in working on specialised areas such as speech and language.

Teaching and Learning Style

We aim to meet all our children's needs by:

- developing partnerships between teachers, teaching assistants and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- having an understanding of how children develop and learn.
- providing a range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.
- providing a carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS taking into account the revised ELGs set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 and through Development Matters.
- making provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- encouraging children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management.
- supporting learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- identifying progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents.
- developing good relationships between the school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining us.

Areas of Learning

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. Three areas have been identified as being particularly important for children's early learning. They give children a foundation for building their learning upon.

Prime Areas:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - we will help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others. They will learn to form positive relationships and develop respect for others. They will develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings and understand appropriate behaviour. We will help children to become confident in their own abilities. We will assist your child in developing an understanding of how their behaviour affects themselves and others and help to regulate these behaviours. We will help your child to develop resilience and a 'can do' attitude. They will also learn how to manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs.
- **Communication and Language** - children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations. Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary; offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.
- **Physical Development** - children will be provided with lots of opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control, movement and balance. They will also be taught about using tools for writing effectively and correctly and also to use creative implements such as paint brushes and scissors; developing those gross and fine motor skills.

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

Specific Areas:

- **Literacy** – this area is split into 3 areas: Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing. Within these areas the children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest. They will use their speaking and listening skills to develop a love of reading and question the texts they encounter.
- **Mathematics** – this area of learning comprises of Number and Numerical Pattern. Children will have lots of opportunities to develop and improve their skills of counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating addition and subtraction problems. They will use their vocabulary and language to describe numerical patterns and make predictions about their findings.
- **Understanding the World** – This ELG is split into 3 areas: Past & Present, People, Culture & Communities and The Natural World. Children will be guided to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people,

places, and the environment by first hand experiences and literature such as non-fiction text, maps, leaflets, story books, first hand tales. This rich exposure to text will strengthen their understanding and enable the children to question their theories.

- **Expressive Arts and Design** – split into 2 areas: Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive. The children will explore and play with a wide range of media and materials as well as being provided with opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

Four Guiding Principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years settings. These are:

- *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 with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.*
- *importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).*

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2025)

At Sparken Hill we deliver learning for all of the areas through purposeful play and learning experiences with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The Foundation Stage Classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely within both our indoor and outdoor environments. The free flow between the inside and the outside has a positive effect on the children's development. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own and communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors; the children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

We support children to become 'good learners' by developing the

Three Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Taken from Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2025)

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. 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.

Enabling Environment

At Sparken Hill Academy we recognise that the learning environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning. From this we plan challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning alongside the key areas of learning that the child will need to cover during their time in EYFS.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning in FS is taken from the children's needs and interests as much as possible, which are based around half termly or weekly themes. We have a two year rolling programme that allows the children the opportunity of 'hook visits' to launch a topic. We have guided activities from this visit but we also incorporate a child's interest or thread as a result of it.

During your child's first half term in FS2 their teacher will complete a Baseline Assessment (according to current government guidance and legislation) to record their current attainment.

Within EYFS we make regular assessments of children's learning and this is the information that we use to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and interests. Observation plays a key role in assessment alongside specific skills such as letter & number recognition, word building and sentence reading.

We track the children's progress using Development Matters as a guide to determine where the children are working at the different age levels. These are: Birth to 3 years, 3 & 4 years old and Reception. At the end of FS1/Nursery each child's level of development is assessed by summative assessment in each area of learning and a written summary is provided for parents/carers.

At the end of FS2 each child's level of development is recorded against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents/carers reporting their progress against the ELGs and assessment scales.

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements (September 2025 Updates)

The EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 (effective from 1 September 2025) includes strengthened safeguarding requirements to enhance child safety and align with best practice. Sparken Hill Academy implements these requirements through the following measures:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is responsible for liaison with local statutory children's services agencies and the Local Safeguarding Partners. The DSL has clear responsibilities and accountability for safeguarding within the EYFS setting.

Safer Recruitment

In line with the 2025 framework, Sparken Hill Academy:

- Obtains professional references before employment for all new staff members
- Verifies references from senior individuals (current employers, training providers)
- Uses the Early Years Employment Reference Template when providing references
- Includes clear procedures in our safeguarding policy to ensure only suitable individuals are recruited
- Provides timely references for former staff, including any substantiated safeguarding concerns

Safeguarding Training

All staff working in EYFS receive appropriate safeguarding training:

- Safeguarding training must be renewed every two years (mandatory requirement)
- Annual refresher training is considered during any two-year period to maintain skills and keep up to date with changes
- Our safeguarding policy includes detail of how training is delivered
- Our policy details how practitioners are supported to put training into practice
- Training meets the criteria set out in the Safeguarding Training Criteria Annex of the EYFS framework

Child Absences and Emergency Contacts

Sparken Hill Academy follows up on child absences in a timely manner:

- If a child is absent for a prolonged period of time, we attempt to contact the child's parents and/or carers
- If a child is absent without notification from the parent or carer, we attempt to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts
- We maintain additional emergency contact details for all children
- We have an attendance policy that is shared with parents and/or carers, which includes expectations for reporting absences

Whistleblowing

Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place for staff to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice in safeguarding provision. Our procedures include:

- Clear guidance on when and how to report concerns
- The process that will be followed after staff report concerns

Safer Eating

The 2025 framework includes new requirements around safer eating:

- Clear procedures for managing allergies and anaphylaxis
- Appropriate guidance on introduction of solid foods
- Choking prevention measures during mealtimes
- A paediatric first aid trained adult must be present whenever children are eating

Paediatric First Aid

All staff working in EYFS, including students, trainees and volunteers, must hold valid paediatric first aid certificates before they count in staff-to-child ratios.

Toileting and Privacy

We ensure children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting. This maintains children's dignity while ensuring appropriate safeguarding oversight.

Transition into F1 / F2 / KS1

It is important to ensure that new F1 children will be comfortable and familiar with the F1 area, staff and routines. We aim to provide as many opportunities as possible for both parents and pre-school children to attend to help ease the start of school. Before starting in F1 the parents and child are invited to new parent meetings and the chance to look around school, the EYFS Unit and our facilities.

Programmes such as Parents as Partners where both children and parents can attend the setting for educationally themed activities allows the children to meet peers and staff and contributes to them feeling safe and secure in their new environment. This also allows staff to begin the process of formative assessment.

Transition from F1 to F2 and from F2 to Key Stage 1 should take place over a staggered period of time. Informal visits from F1 to F2 or from F2 to Year 1 can begin the process leading to periods of time spent in the F2 or Year 1 setting with familiar staff. A more formal week or fortnight at the end of the summer term will enable the transitioning children to develop links, friendship groups and an awareness of their new environment in preparation for the new school year. A set of planned parent meetings to include administrative staff, teachers, teaching assistants and members of the SLT will ensure that information about new routines and expectations are shared and agreed upon.

Moderation

Under the current Government guidance around the EYFS Framework (2025), there are no plans to host any formal moderations between moderator and schools.

Internal Moderation & Moderation within the Worksop Family of Schools

As a result of the decision to remove the moderation element of the curriculum, internal and that carried with local schools, is an invaluable tool for staff.

The moderation of the EYFS Profile assessments begins in each individual setting.

The EYFS in relation to the ELGs. Everyone needs to feel confident that the recorded judgements are fair and consistent for all children so that judgements made for any one child are comparable with those made for all children. The starting point for the agreement of judgements should be the ELGs illustrating the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS for each ELG and their exemplification.

The purpose of moderation is to:

- secure the consistency and accuracy of judgements made by different practitioners;
- reassure practitioners that their judgements are accurate, valid and consistent with national standards;
- within our own settings we, as practitioners, can agree assessment judgements with each other.

As a family of schools we believe it is important for practitioners to build a shared understanding of the ELGs and national exemplification of standards and to discuss the assessment of children's attainment with colleagues from other settings. Therefore, each setting belongs to a 'moderation quad' so that practitioners can share experience to develop their assessment skills.

Worksop Family EYFS Network Group

As a family of schools practitioners from each setting have the opportunity to attend an EYFS network group which meets every half term. The meetings are hosted, in turn, by one of the schools. The group meets after school and the meetings usually last an hour.

In the Autumn Term the group establishes a set of three priorities to work upon during that academic year and an action plan is drawn up. During the subsequent meetings there are opportunities to work collaboratively on the priorities as well as opportunity for networking, looking around the host setting and sharing good practice.

These meetings are led by an identified EYFS Lead Practitioner from one of the settings. It is the responsibility of that person to ensure that:

- all information is passed via email to all the settings within the family
- all settings are aware of the date, time and venue of all meetings
- all settings receive an agenda for each meeting
- all settings receive the minutes of each meeting

In the Summer Term, Sparken Hill hosts Tea for Transition – a Worksop Family of Schools events. Practitioners come to school to discuss pupils who will be moving from one setting to another. This is to aid a smooth transition for pupils from one setting to another. At this event we also identify those pupils who will possibly need extra transition and how this can be facilitated by the two settings.

Policy Information

This policy is based on the EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 (effective from 1 September 2025) and incorporates all requirements and guidance contained therein.

Policy reviewed: February 2026

Chair of Governors:  Date: 26-02-26

Principal:  Date: 26-02-26

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually.