



Early Years Policy

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

Children at Dunn Street are provided with a 26 place Nursery unit, offering 15 and 30 hour provision and a 21 place Reception class. Our Nursery also has excellent links with the attached children's centre 'Stanley's of Jarrow' which offer 15 hour funded places for 2 year olds. The children in Nursery and Reception share a stimulating outdoor environment, which is accessible from their indoor space. Practitioners plan for meaningful learning opportunities that interest and excite children during all stages of their development. Moreover, practitioners use high quality texts as a starting point for learning opportunities. Children will have a range of adult-led and structured play opportunities throughout their day. Key learning points will be planned for and children's interests catered for. During children's structured play adults will play and interact with the children, providing challenging responses to extend their knowledge and understanding.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

At Dunn Street we want your child to feel excited about learning and that is why we plan stimulating and motivating activities for your children: activities that will build on their prior learning and will, above all, interest your child to want to know more.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

How will Dunn Street put these principles into Practice?

- We will use the seven areas of learning in the EYFS to deliver a fully inclusive and inspiring curriculum for our children.
- We will provide a fun, engaging and stimulating environment for your child to learn in: one that challenges all individuals.
- Where we can we will provide our children with real life experiences to enhance their learning.
- We will plan interesting activities and learning experiences which build upon prior learning regardless of developmental stages.
- We will work in partnership with parents and carers to provide the best possible start for children.
- We will provide a secure and motivating learning environment: both indoors and out.
- We will work with other agencies to support individual needs.
- We will encourage children to develop their independence.
- We will use a play-based approach to learning across the EYFS.
- We will develop your child's social and emotional wellbeing through our school values.

'Children need the freedom and time to play. Play is not a luxury. Play is a necessity.' Kay Redfield Jamison

4.2 Teaching

At Dunn Street our teaching style is built upon a strict routine from Nursery through to Reception.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Our indoor and outdoor environments are used as our children's third teacher and are given equal weighting in our daily routine. Learning links are made throughout the environments and daily directed activities so children can naturally learn through our setting.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities.

5. Assessment

At Dunn Street, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

When your child first starts Dunn Street Early Years, they will be given a learning journal which will document their development from the first day they start until they leave us at the end of Reception. Parents and Carers are given the opportunity to add to these learning journals so that we create a picture and gain a firm understanding of the whole child. All adults within the setting will gather evidence for your child's learning journal from a range of activities both adult-directed and child initiated. Parents and Carers will have daily contact with the Early Years Team at Dunn Street and this contact is crucial in building relationships and an understanding of your child and family. The observations and assessments that are carried out will enable staff to plan for the next steps in your child's learning journey.

6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

7. Transitions

In Nursery, these begin with a home visit. A visit to your home is a valuable experience for your child and our staff: this enables relationships to develop whilst also promoting a smooth transition when you leave your child for the first time with our team. You will have daily contact with the Nursery team to share any information, whilst also being invited to parents evening and workshops throughout the year. We value parental partnerships at Dunn Street and will try to involve you as much as we can during these crucial years in your child's development.

As your child is preparing for the move in Reception, children will have regular visits into the setting and you will be invited to an open event, so you can explore the setting and ask your child's new teachers any questions you may have. To ease the transition between Nursery and Reception, we will have meetings with the Nursery team to enable us to cater for your child when they enter a new phase in their learning journey.

Finally, as your child comes near the end of their EYFS journey, we will work closely with the Year 1 team to ensure that, when your child moves on, they continue to have the opportunities to meet their full potential.

8. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Your child's safety is paramount to us at Dunn Street and we will provide a safe, secure learning environment for your child. The EYFS also encourages children to take risks and to assess risks giving them fundamental life skills. Within the Early Years Team, we have qualified first aiders and carry out regular risk assessments of our equipment and setting. As children are at different stages in their development, your child may need 'intimate care': this is care related to washing, dressing or assisting with the toilet. We understand that children - at this young age - may still need assistance with some of these tasks; however, we ask you to support us in enabling your child to become more independent. At Dunn Street we will not carry out 'intimate care' unless you have given written consent for members of the team to do so.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by teaching your child about gaining healthy habits for life. Over your child's time in the EYFS we will raise topics to the children such as the effects of eating too many sweet things and the importance of brushing your teeth.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by M.Trotter and A.Burden every 2 of years.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

'The first five years have so much to do with how the next 80 turn out' B Gates

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy