

Alston Moor Federation
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Vision and Aims

At Alston Moor Federation, we aim to give all children in our care the best possible start to their future, through a creative, broad and balanced curriculum based around the children's own interests, together with safe and stimulating environments in both of our Primary Schools.

We aim to provide a wide range of enjoyable experiences, where children can express their individuality as they become confident, independent learners.

In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

We to ensure that children "learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2014)

We aim to give children the "broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2014)

What is EYFS?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year.

Within the Federation we have two Primary schools, both of which take Reception children in the September after their 4th birthday.

At Alston Primary School, the Reception children are taught alongside the children in Year One and at Nenthead Primary School, the children are taught alongside the children in Key Stage One. Within both mixed age settings, the EYFS curriculum and principles are paramount in our planning for the Reception children.

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 children's needs.
- Learning and Developing – an acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

"Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments."

(Development Matters in The Early Years Foundation Stage)

A Unique Child

At Alston Moor Federation, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Providing opportunities which enable staff to get to know the children before they enter Reception, ensuring that their individual interests and needs are suitably prepared for.
- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, as well as developing their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based upon children's individual learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support the children and to help them to learn effectively.
- 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.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to support/extend as necessary.

Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)

All children and their families are valued at Alston Moor Federation. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provision available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all individuals. Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and advice will be sought from the schools' Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo).

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in our Federation are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to enable them to understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them to develop this crucial life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks but they need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all our children.

At Alston Moor Federation, we comply with the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014. We understand that we are required to:

- promote the welfare and safeguarding of children.
- promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- manage behaviour effectively and in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development.
- ensure that all adults who look after the children or who have supervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their individual needs.
- maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At Alston Moor Federation, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Within both Reception settings we ensure that all relationships are:

- warm and loving and foster a sense of belonging.
- sensitive and responsive to the children's needs, feelings and interests.
- consistent in setting clear boundaries.
- stimulating.
- built on key person relationships within the setting.

(as outlined in Development Matters in The Early Years Foundation Stage)

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played prior to their child starting school and their future role in educating and supporting their child.

We aim to establish and maintain close links with all parents/carers through:

- meeting with parents in the June prior to their child starting in Reception class.
- offering a home visit to each family prior to their child starting in Reception class.
- asking parents to complete an admissions form, a medical form, a behaviour contract and a booklet which provides information about their child prior to him/her starting in Reception class.
- welcoming parents and carers into the classroom setting as they drop off and collect their child each day.
- encouraging parents/carers to contribute to ongoing assessments of the children by providing information about achievements demonstrated at home.
- communicating with parents/carers through a weekly newsletter, which provides a summary of the week's activities and gives information about upcoming events.
- providing information to parents/carers about ways in which they can support their child's learning at home.
- encouraging parents/carers to comment on learning activities shared at home e.g. through writing comments in the children's reading records.
- encouraging parents/carers to talk to a member of staff as soon as they have a concern.
- providing parents/carers with information about what they should do if they wish to discuss concerns with the school's deputy head or headteacher.
- welcoming parents/carers into school to support with activities.
- welcoming parents/carers to support out of school activities such as educational visits.
- inviting parents/carers to attend consultation evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms and providing a written report on their child's progress and achievements at the end of the Summer term.

Enabling Environments

At both Primary schools, we aim to create attractive and stimulating learning environments where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily free flow access to indoor and outdoor environments, both of which are set up with discrete areas of learning and planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following the children's interests. Effective planning of the learning environments we offer is informed by observations of the children. Play based learning, exploration and investigation are paramount and the learning environments are set up to facilitate this. Children are encouraged to direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff support and enhance play within the indoor and outdoor environments and create opportunities to challenge and extend the children's learning as appropriate.

Health and Safety

Within the Federation, there are clear procedures for assessing risk which includes procedures for keeping children safe within the school setting, during outings and for any aspect of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment.

In line with the EYFS Statutory Framework 2014, we undertake to:

- ensure that children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon.
- provide fresh drinking water at all times.
- provide milk and fruit during the day.
- ensure that a suitably qualified first aider is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept.
- ensure that all staff and visitors are made aware of the fire and emergency evacuation policy.
- ensure that all staff and visitors are aware of, and adhere to, the all aspects of the Federation's safeguarding policy.
- ensure that all staff and visitors understand that mobile telephones should not be used within the setting and that cameras used in school must only be used for their specified purpose, and are not for staff's personal use.
- ensure that the storage and administration of medication is in line with the Federation's policy on this matter.

Learning and Developing

Within the EYFS curriculum there are seven areas of learning and development of which three are 'prime areas' and four are 'specific areas'. Each area is sub divided. All areas are important and inter-connected, with the prime areas being particularly important in laying the foundations for successful learning.

The Prime Areas:

- **Communication and Language:** Listening and Attention/Understanding/Speaking
- **Physical Development:** Moving and Handling/Health and Self Care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Self Confidence and Self Awareness/Managing Feelings and Behaviour/Making Relationships

The Specific Areas:

- **Literacy:** Reading/Writing
- **Mathematics:** Numbers/Shape, Space and Measures
- **Understanding the World:** The World/Technology/People and Communities
- **Expressive Arts and Design:** Exploring and Using Media and Materials/Being Imaginative

Children's development in all of the above areas is gauged through a continuous cycle of careful observation and assessment and this informs planning for their next steps in learning.

At Alston Moor Federation, in line with the Statutory Framework for EYFS (2014), "each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and to relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an ongoing judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year One."

Characteristics of Effective Learning:

When planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways in which each individual child learns. These are called the Characteristics of Effective Learning and are assessed alongside the Prime and Specific Areas.

- **Playing and Exploring:** children investigate and explore, play with what they know and develop the willingness to 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning:** children become involved and concentrate on tasks, persisting and bouncing back when faced with difficulties and they enjoy achieving what they set out to do.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** children have their own ideas, building on prior experiences and making links in their learning. They choose ways to do things and can review and adapt their strategy as needed.

Fundamental British Values in the EYFS

The Fundamental British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths are implicitly embedded in the EYFS curriculum. Examples of how these values may be promoted within daily activities include:

Democracy: making decisions together:

As part of the focus on Self Confidence and Self Awareness within Personal, Social and Emotional Development, children are encouraged to see their role in the bigger picture, understanding that their views count and learning to value the views of others.

Rule of Law: understanding that rules matter:

As part of the focus on Managing Feelings and Behaviour within Personal, Social and Emotional Development, children are encouraged to understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, learning to distinguish right from wrong. Children are supported in creating and agreeing rules and codes of behaviour.

Individual Liberty: freedom for all:

As part of the focus on Self Confidence and Self Awareness within Personal, Social and Emotional Development and on People and Communities within Understanding the World, children are encouraged and supported in developing a positive sense of themselves. Staff provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge and self-esteem and to increase their confidence in their own abilities.

Children engage in a range of activities which allow them to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, to reflect on their differences and to understand that we are all free to hold different opinions.

Mutual Respect and Tolerance: treat others as you wish to be treated:

As part of the focus on People and Communities within Understanding the World and on Managing Feelings and Behaviour within Personal, Social and Emotional Development, staff actively create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where all views, faiths, cultures and races are valued. Children are provided with opportunities to engage with the wider community. Staff encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting each other's opinions. Children are supported in acquiring a tolerance and appreciation of, and a respect for, their own and each other's cultures, exploring similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, faiths, cultures and traditions, sharing and discussing practices, celebrations and experiences.

Prevent Duty in the EYFS

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act places a duty on Early Years Providers “to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.”

At Alston Moor Federation, all staff within the EYFS are aware of, and adhere to, the Federation guidelines on this issue.

Transition from Pre-School/Feeder Settings

During the Summer term prior to a child’s entry into Reception class, the following procedures are in place to ensure a successful transition:

- Reception staff visit Pre-School (and other feeder settings if appropriate) to be introduced to the children and to observe them within a familiar setting.
- Children and Pre-School staff visit one afternoon a week throughout the Summer term to become familiar with the staff and secure within the setting. A photographic record is kept of each child’s activities during these sessions and shared with parents.
- Parents/carers are invited to attend a meeting in June to enable them to visit the setting, meet the staff, be provided with necessary information and to ask questions.
- Each family is offered, and encouraged to receive, a home visit from members of the Reception staff during the Summer term, providing both parents/carers and staff with the opportunity to talk in a less formal way and to discuss any specific issues/concerns. These visits also enable staff to gain a valuable initial insight into what each child is interested in out of school.
- At Alston Primary School, the new Reception intake comes to school for mornings only for the first three weeks of the Autumn Term. The children are collected after their lunch and parents/carers meet briefly with the class teacher at this point, providing an opportunity to feedback on how the children are settling and to discuss any concerns. At Nenthead Primary School, this system is flexible, depending on the size of the intake and the wishes of parents.
- Reception staff liaise with Pre-School/feeder setting staff and records from the children’s prior setting are handed on to the relevant class teacher.
- Baseline assessments are carried out on entry into Reception class and these assessments inform planning for individual children’s next steps in learning.

From Reception Class into Year One

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The profile provides parents/carers and all relevant staff with a well-rounded picture of each child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year One. Profile scores are moderated within the LEA.

Each child’s level of development is assessed against the Early Learning Goals and the Profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). This information informs future planning to ensure each child is provided with relevant learning experiences as they make the transition into Year One.

