# MURDISHAW WEST PRIMARY and NURSERY SCHOOL

# EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY (EYFS)

Autumn 2026

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| Policy Title | EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE |
| School/HBC | School |
| Written by | V Edwards/C Sarsfield/J Phillips |
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At Murdishaw West Primary and Nursery School, we work together to…. Collaborate, Achieve, Respect and Enjoy. At Murdishaw West, we CARE!

Intent:

At Murdishaw West Primary and Nursery School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in securing foundations for future learning and development. Our EYFS curriculum is designed to enhance and build upon prior learning. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is motivating and rich in first hand experiences that encourage independence and resilience and nurture a love of learning. We strive for all of our children to reach their full potential, by providing a safe learning environment in which they can develop personally, socially, emotionally, physically, creatively and intellectually.

Our curriculum intends to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development.
- Teach the early skills of reading, writing and number.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, foster independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions.
- Ensure that all children feel valued, respected and included and that classroom resources and activities reflect the culture and language of their homes.

Implementation:

At Murdishaw West, we believe:

- All children are unique; we celebrate their similarities and differences, using these to create a curriculum that is flexible and works with the children's interests.
- Children are powerful learners who can make good progress in their learning when given the right guidance and support.
- Children should be encouraged to become independent learners, taking some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation through the use of natural resources available within the school grounds.
- A mixture of approaches is required for effective pedagogy. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, as well as through guided learning and direct teaching.
- A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outdoors, is vital to enhance children's learning experiences through high quality play. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. Play is a vital component of children's lives, and it is an important way for skills to be developed and practised. It is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development. Therefore, all staff ensure time and space is available for children to invent their own play and adults may join in to sensitively support and extend their learning.
- The development of children's spoken language underpins all our practice. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are

interested in or doing and repeating back what they say correctly and with additional new vocabulary, our staff build on children's language effectively.

- Using positive interactions between children and adults within the provision areas. Building relationships and using intensive interaction techniques to develop vocabulary and communication.

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. Their attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others so our staff regularly reflect on the rates that children are developing at and adjust their practice appropriately. There are three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which underpin what we do. These are:

• Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and are willing to 'have a go'.
• Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their own achievements.
• Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Inclusion:

At Murdishaw West, we aim to ensure all pupils and their families, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, are provided with equal access to all aspects of school life and are valued within our school community. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We help them do this by planning to meet the individual needs of all children, including those with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We strongly believe that early identification of special educational needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their personal, social, emotional and mental health as well as learning needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement. The school's SENDCo is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents, and for arranging external interventions and support where necessary. For further information, see Equal Opportunities and Diverse Policy and our SEN Policy.

Partnerships with Parents:

All staff are involved in developing positive relationships with pupils and their families. The class teacher acts as the 'key person' to all children, supported by the teaching assistant. We all recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and staff work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

We value Parents and Carers by:

- Organising a thorough induction programme to welcome children and parents / carers into our school community.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents / carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner with the class teacher.
- Outlining the core areas of learning in The Early Years Foundation Stage during regular stay and play sessions, to enable parents / carers to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home.

- Providing termly curriculum information to inform parents / carers of their child's current curriculum and learning opportunities.
- Providing regular updates and sharing their child's personal learning experiences in school through SeeSaw or similar online platforms.
- Sharing learning experiences through stay and play sessions
- Encouraging parents / carers and children to share their child's special moments or achievements at home by using SeeSaw.
- Extensive experience and research in early literacy indicates that, if children are taught well, their backgrounds, ethnicity, level of disadvantage, their disabilities and other variables, such as being a boy or summer born, should rarely prevent their learning to read. Therefore, we teach reading skills as soon as all children start our school. See our Early Reading Policy for more information.
- For all children ready to formally read, we encourage parents / carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading record book.
- For those children not formally ready to read using decoding skills, we encourage parents / carers to regularly share a book with their child at home by providing story books for the children to take home and enjoy with their family. These are referred to as 'sharing stories.' We encourage families to enjoy reading together.
- All children are able to take a sharing book home, which they have chosen to share with their family to encourage a love of reading.
- Discussing individual targets at parents' evenings in Autumn and Spring terms and providing a formal annual written report in July, summarising the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals. If we feel a child is not on track to meet these end goals, parents / carers are informed immediately, and plans are put in place to close the identified gaps.
- Inviting parents / carers to help in the reception class, or other classes in the school, and to accompany children on school visits.
- Inviting parents to watch their children in performances such as our Christmas performance.

<u>Our Induction Process:</u>

We place a high priority on meeting all children's individual needs so transition into our school is successful. All children are visited by the Nursery/Foundation class teacher as appropriate in their home or pre-school setting, if possible. Our Nursery or foundation class teacher speaks on a 1-1 basis with all parents / carers of children new to our school, as well as contacting all previous preschool/nursery key workers, if possible. All these conversations form how we plan for a child's successful start to Murdishaw West Primary and Nursery School. During Summer Term 2, children who will be starting our Reception Class in September, are invited to school with their parents/carers to take part in a stay and play session so they can meet with staff and other members of the school community. The children are then invited to an additional stay and play session on their own to build relationships with staff and become more comfortable with their learning environment. Opportunity is also given to the parents / carers to ask any questions they may have about their child's induction. Parents/carers are invited to an information meeting where they can meet the Head Teacher and key teaching staff. Here, parents / carers are given a 'New starters pack' with a prospectus and leaflets outlining school routines and arrangements. The school health team is also present, if possible, for answering questions about health support and parents / carers can complete specific consent forms. For our new Nursery children, due to the young age of a child and the varied needs a 2-year-old brings, we hold discussions and arrange transition sessions on a 1-1 basis. Before they join us, parents and child are invited for a stay and play/ Further transition sessions can be planned if needed until the child is ready to stay for a full session.

Staff work closely with parents / carers to ensure that individual needs are met through a carefully planned schedule that allows children to feel secure in their new learning environment, to get to know the children individually, establishing good relationships and so we can begin to carry out baseline assessment through observing the children and being in the provision with them.

Foundation to Year 1 Transition

Foundation and Year 1 teachers work closely together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the foundation year.
- Foundation staff plan for more structured and independent activities to be undertaken as children develop, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Foundation children meet the Year 1 teacher during assembly, singing, playtime, during the school day and other whole school activities during the foundation year.
- Individual EYFS profiles and reading records are passed onto the year 1 teacher. The Profile provides parents / carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning.
- An EYFS Profile end of year class summary is passed on to the Year 1 teacher.
- Foundation and Year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of children in July.
- Foundation children visit their Year 1 classroom and staff in the weeks of July.
- Where possible, the Year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences which gradually become more formalised during the academic year.
- Teaching and Learning in EYFS follows our whole school schemes of learning to ensure consistency in approach, as children transition into Year 1.
- All children receive a social story for home so transitions can be supported with parents too.

The Early Years' Learning Environment:

Children have daily access to the indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and follows the children's interest. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation. We call this 'choose your learning'. Children have frequent visits to our school grounds and participate in outdoor learning activities in their environment. Here, the children can discuss and investigate plants and wildlife in the local environment and can use natural resources to create artwork and build structures as well as use investigative skills.

Our learning environment is:
- Attractive and welcoming to all children and parents.
- A place where children feel secure and confident.
- Stimulating and exciting.
- A place where children's work is valued and displayed attractively.
- A place where children can play individually or in small groups throughout quiet, noisy, messy, yet structured, learning activities.
- Accessible with outdoor areas.
- A place where independence, communication and questioning are encouraged.
- A place that is well resourced and accessible to children.
- A place that allows focused child-initiated play.
- A place that allows children to develop their own interests.

Planning:

Our curriculum,  created from ages 2 and above,  is regularly reviewed, ensuring that it provides children with the knowledge, skills, self-belief and cultural capital they will need to succeed in their journey through Murdishaw West and later in life. We aim for all children to develop independence and be able to communicate clearly. To have the self-belief, to be willing to have a go, get involved and concentrate, have their own ideas and enjoy achieving what they set out to do. Our children are provided with rich learning opportunities that will teach them key knowledge and skills, whilst allowing them the opportunity to initiate their own ideas and activities so they can develop the learning characteristics required to succeed in life.

It is important to remember that the curriculum includes everything a child experiences and not just a programme of activities. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children, ensuring that we follow current interests and experiences. The organisation and routines in the children's day provide many opportunities for effective learning, extending what they know and can already do whilst ensuring there is challenge for all. There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

1. Long-term planning uses a thematic approach. These themes cover areas that are familiar and of interest to young children, enabling us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. We also plan to ensure the children have the range of experiences needed for them to be successful as they progress through our school and for later life.
2. Medium-term planning addresses aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term. When planning, we use observations and pupil voice to ensure we follow children's interests, meet their next steps and provide opportunities to reach the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas covered by the EYFS Profile and Development Matters. These are split into 'Prime' and 'Specific' areas:

Prime Areas:
Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Communication and Language
Physical Development

Specific Areas:
Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the World
Expressive Arts and Design

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents / carers 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. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents / carers and agree how to support them. Medium term planning reflects a balance of these seven areas of learning. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

3. Short-term planning focuses on the day-to-day details of teaching and learning, referring to the medium-term plan objectives and activities / experiences linked to the half-termly theme. Planning is also informed through ongoing observations of child initiated or spontaneous active and enhanced play opportunities (indoors and outdoors) allowing flexibility in response to individual needs and interests and allowing for revision and modification of plans where necessary.

<u>Safeguarding</u>

We work within the EYFS Statutory Framework .

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a5f8e4fb00f3323bf1a23a1/EYFS_group_and_school_based_from_September_2026.pdf)

We aim to provide a safe and secure learning environment for every child. Health and Safety risk assessments are carried out regularly by our site manager. Safety checks on the indoor and outdoor areas are carried out daily by the class teacher. An indoor and outdoor safety check is carried out each morning. All adults who teach and support children hold a current DBS certificate. At least one staff member working in EYFS holds a Paediatric First Aid Qualification. Children are supervised when eating by a member of staff with a Paediatric First Aid Qualification. Volunteer helpers must sign in at the school office and always wear visitor ID supplied by the school. We have a clear Safer Eating Policy, Safer Sleeping Policy and Intimate Care Policy that staff adhere to. Our whole School Policies have been written to include our Maintained Nursery Provision.

Learning and Development:

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 and that while the seven areas provide a framework for the Early Years' curriculum, young children's learning does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over several of the seven areas at any one time therefore all areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Teaching and Learning:

Effective teaching and learning is supported through:

- The partnership between staff and parents / carers that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement.
- The partnership between foundation and the whole school through taking part in whole school activities and working with individual year groups (e.g., den building, buddies, reading, outdoor classroom day)
- The partnership with foundation and local community (e.g., visits to the local post office, visitors including our local PCSO and other people who help us in our community.)
- The understanding that staff have knowledge 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 of 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, including the effective use of ICT.
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

At Murdishaw West, we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities and decide when child-initiated or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves, modelling and extending learning. Well

planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is one of the keyways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. This is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children's lives, and it is an important way for skills to be developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

Principles of High-Quality Play:

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills.
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play can be supported and extended by adults
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Role of the adult:

- To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
- To support children's learning through planned play activities.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play.

Assessment, Recording and Monitoring

At Murdishaw West Primary School, we regularly undertake assessment for learning by analysing and reviewing what we know about each child's development and learning in order to make informed decisions about their progress. This enables us to plan their next steps in learning so we can meet their development and learning needs. All staff who interact with the child will contribute to the assessment process.

Within the first six weeks that a child starts in our Reception Class, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS Profile for each child. Children are assessed against the seventeen Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are meeting expected levels of development or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents / carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents / carers in a written annual report. 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.

Formative assessment:

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal observations, focused observations, baseline assessment, other focused assessments e.g.

sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents / carers. Each child has an online SeeSaw account. This is a safe, secure, online system of recording that allows parents / carers to view the account at any time and contribute to their child's learning journey with home observations. This system also allows us to safely store photographs and observations of the children to support judgements against the end of year goals.

Summative assessment:

The EYFS Profile summarises all the formative assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements. It summarises children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It is completed at the end of each term by the class teacher and data is collected on the school's Insight system and the Local Authority system. The teacher undertakes in-house and local cluster group moderation to ensure judgements are accurate.

Impact:

Children demonstrate high levels of engagement in activities; developing their independence and speaking and listening skills- they are able to communicate well to both adults and children. They become independent learners and have the ability to regulate and manage their emotions. Children develop skills across all areas of the EYFS curriculum.

Children develop a wider sense of the world around them and can draw on these experiences during interactions with others and link this to new learning. They enjoy a range of experiences and develop vocabulary needed for them to be successful as they progress through school and for later life. Children can apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with adults, drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing. From their own starting points; children will make excellent social, emotional and academic progress, developing a sense of themselves so that they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.