

The Shotover Nursery Schools Federation

Shotover Federation Nursery Schools Learning and Teaching Policy

Reviewed on: November 2025

Chair of governors.....

Headteacher...*Natalie Wilson*

Date of Review : Nov 2027.....

Aims

Our learning and teaching policy is guided by the Shotover Nursery Schools vision statement

We are welcoming and inclusive schools. Governors, staff and families are committed to working together to provide high quality education and care for young children. We believe every child matters and strive to provide rich experiences that support each child's unique development based on early child principles.

Our schools are places where everyone is known, valued and respected.

- We plan experiences which stimulate children to wonder about the world and to think creatively, led by strengths and their own interests.
- We share our outstanding practice beyond our school, by supporting professional development.
- We strive to be a center of excellence with experienced and knowledgeable staff who are lifelong learners.
- We offer varied, enticing environments that encourage independent exploratory learning through play for all children whatever their needs.
- We have high aspirations for learning and development for all children and their families.
- Our strong, nurturing key person approach ensures that all children are supported to fulfil their potential.
- Staff work alongside children and families in order to develop and extend their learning.

The EYFS has four guiding principles which shape our practice at the Shotover Nursery Schools:

- 1) Every child is a unique child
- 2) Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- 3) Children learn and develop well in enabling environments
- 4) Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

To complement our curriculum we use Birth to 5 Matters non statutory guidance. Focussing on ranges 3 to 6 and beyond.

A Unique Child

Child development

At the Shotover Nursery Schools we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We also recognise that each child develops in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by both their home background and feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing circle times and reward incentives, to encourage children to develop positive attitudes to learning.

Inclusive practice

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and do not discriminate against any child. All children and their families are valued and all our children matter. We aim to give each child every opportunity to become their best self. We do this by taking into account our children's range of life experiences and what they know and can do when planning for their learning.

In the Shotover Nursery Schools we endeavour to remove barriers to learning to enable children to take full advantage of opportunities later in life. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of every child including: those with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We liaise closely with all relevant professionals in order to provide early support for those children and their families who need it.

We 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,
- 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,
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued,
- Assigning a key person to each child who makes links with children's home experiences through parents/carers,
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping,
- Planning challenging activities for children whatever their age and stage of development,
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

Keeping safe

It is important to us that all children feel safe and are safe within the nursery school. We help children become familiar with boundaries, rules and limits and how they can learn to take risks within a safe environment. Our children are allowed to take risks and are taught how to recognize, minimise or avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical, emotional and psychological well being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Policy)

Health and well-being

Children's health is an integral part of their emotional, mental, social, environmental and spiritual well-being. We promote healthy snacks and offer foods from different cultures to develop their taste preferences. We provide children with access to fresh drinking water. Activities relating to the food cycle are interwoven in planning such as planting seeds, gathering, preparing and eating! We ensure that children can rest during the day and have quiet areas indoors and places outdoors where children can relax alongside space for vigorous free movements.

Positive Relationships

Respecting each other

At the Shotover Nursery Schools we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through forming secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents play in supporting their child/ren's development. We do this through:

- Talking to parents/carers about their child before they start in our school
- Offering visits to meet each child in their home prior to starting
- Offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's development and progress and provide fortnightly learning updates through their learning journals
- Encouraging parents/carers to talk to their child's key person about any concerns they may have
- Offering various activities throughout the year that involve parents/carers in the life of school for example, community events
- Supporting parents through regular newsletters/sways
- Supporting parents/carers whose first language is one other than English
- Offering nurturing programmes for parents

We encourage parents to support positive habits of attendance before they begin formal schooling.

Supporting learning

We believe effective teaching is rooted in the child's own interests and ideas and involves the child learning through play. Effective teaching involves:

- Engaging and stimulating each child
- Regularly reviewing each child's progress towards learning outcomes
- Varying what we provide to match children's interests and needs

- Maximising opportunities for children to explore and learn in different ways including independently and in groups of different sizes.

Learning opportunities are planned by staff, building upon children's interests and needs using the updated 2021 EYFS curriculum guidance. We use the following guiding principles in our provision of effective learning and teaching opportunities:

- Children learn to be resilient and strong from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents as well as their key person.
- In their play children learn at their highest level. Through their play children discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates- staff work alongside families to understand the variety of barriers to learning that exist in our community.
- All areas of learning are equally important and interconnected.
- We know that children are learning and making progress when they display certain dispositions and behaviours such as curiosity, motivation, confidence, enjoyment, independence and involvement.
- We work towards developing the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning in all children.
- The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. A rich and varied environment supports children's learning.
- Children learn in a variety of ways: from and with each other, with adults, through their interactions with the environment.
- Children learn both inside and outside, in the nursery garden and Forest school sessions Both environments are equally important, in different ways, in supporting children's learning

Routines are an important way that children feel secure and can make sense of all the opportunities offered throughout their time in school. Our routines are structured yet flexible. Children play and learn through our continuous provision indoor and outdoor throughout their day where they are supported by different adults according to their needs and interests. We have small group time and whole group time providing adult-led activities.

Key person

At the Shotover Nursery Schools each child has a key person who knows the child and their family well. The key person builds confidence, gives children opportunities to express their thinking and use their initiative. We believe children learn and develop effectively when the key person provides:

- First-hand experiences
- Individual and collaborative learning experiences
- Appropriate pace
- An environment where children can take risks
- Innovative delivery
- Clear expectations
- Opportunities to review and reflect
- Thinking time
- Thorough preparation and organisation
- Activities building on prior learning
- Open-ended, thought provoking challenging questions
- Support for children with differing needs
- Support for parents and carers

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

“The best kind of teacher is one who helps you do what you couldn’t do for yourself but doesn’t do it for you” (Child aged 8, quoted in “Teaching Children to think” by Robert Fisher, Nelson Thornes 1990)

The role of the adult Practitioner

Adult Practitioners support children's learning through:

- encouraging independence and autonomy.
- appropriate responses that encourage and extend curiosity, understanding and knowledge.
- building warm, trusting relationships through sensitive observation and evaluation.
- helping children to learn so that they make connections in their knowledge and understanding and are actively supported to grow and develop.
- encouraging children to reflect on their learning.
- a flexible, child-led approach that enables practitioners to respond accurately to individual children's learning and development needs.
- knowledge of child development and the EYFS curriculum.
- supporting and extending children's thinking through conversation where the practitioner might (at different times) inform, explain, wonder, reflect or help the child to make connections.
- sensitivity to the individual development of each child to ensure that the learning opportunities they undertake are ambitious for the stage they are learning at and what they are working towards.
- planning supportive and ambitious learning opportunities in all areas of the nursery.
- being mindful of the variety of opportunities that our planned learning environment can offer throughout the day.
- supporting children to initiate their own learning.
- having a regular dialogue with children showing interest, clarifying ideas, asking questions to find out more about what the child is thinking.
- knowing the right time to teach new skills and understanding, and what support is needed to achieve this.
- developing the children's resilience, by supporting them to try, sometimes fail and try again.
- modelling creative thinking, practical skills, and positive conversations.

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development – Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Play and exploration

At the Shotover Federation Nursery Schools we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. They develop their skills through a variety of processes. These include:

- Investigation
- Experimentation
- Listening
- Observing
- Talking and discussing
- Asking questions
- Practical exploration and role play
- Retrieving information
- Imagining
- Repetition
- Problem solving
- Making choices and decision-making
- Making predictions

We use the 'Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning' to shape our practices .

Playing and Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and thinking critically
<u>Finding out and exploring</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What areas / activities are they drawn to? • Do they prefer to work in a group / alone? • Do they initiate activities themselves or join in an existing one with a group? • Do they think aloud describing what they do? 	<u>Being involved and concentrating</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the children keep focused on a self-initiated activity for a long period of time? • Are they concentrating and involved in the activity without being distracted? • Do they show care with what they're doing? • Do they demonstrate concentration through silence or thinking aloud? 	<u>Having their own ideas</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they try something different rather than follow what someone else has done? • Do they address a problem with a strategy? • Retaining independence - not asking for support even if it takes longer to achieve the outcome
<u>Using what they know in their play</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In play do they draw on experiences from home / outside school? • Do they act out situations in the role play area? • Are they confident in finding tools, materials and resources they need for a particular project or idea? 	<u>Keeping on trying</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do children show persistence - not giving up even if it means starting again? • Do they ask for help / support if they need it? • Do they discuss solutions for challenges with peers / adults or work things through themselves? 	<u>Using what they already know to learn new things</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they understand patterns and predictability of events? • Talks about / explains how their process links to a previous experience • Do they draw upon knowledge or experiences not immediately related to their activity?
<u>Being willing to have a go</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels of persistence - do they give up at first hurdle or keep trying? • Are they eager to try new ideas or do they stay with what they are familiar with? • Are they able to talk about / review what they've done if things haven't worked? • Do they work best with continual support or prefer to get on with activities themselves? 	<u>Enjoying achieving what they set out to do</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a sense of satisfaction and pride when they have completed an activity; do they want to show / tell people? • Do they relish challenges and continually try to make things better? • Do they evaluate themselves and try different things as a result? • Are they 'intrinsically motivated' - achieving things for themselves as opposed to adult praise? 	<u>Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they confident in using a 'trial and error' approach and talking about why some things do / don't work • Choosing different ways of approaching activities and adapting if it doesn't work

We provide opportunities for children to become engaged, motivated and to think critically. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas and learn how to control their behaviour 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. They can express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. This happens best when children have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides our children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning. Children's learning is extended through accessing resources freely and being allowed to move them around our school.

Children are given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning and development, not just through the arts. Staff support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS sets out seven areas of learning and development set out as prime areas.

There are three prime areas (particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving):

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

There are four specific areas which require more direct teaching and through which the prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult focused and child initiated activities. In each of the seven

areas there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that set out the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS (end of the reception year). We plan our intentions, implement and review the impact as part of our two-weekly planning cycles. Each cohort of children may have very different needs and we plan according to that need, having high aspirations for all children.

Children are taught how to use all resources safely through focused activities. The adult's role within continuous provision areas encourages our children to interact with resources and the environment with care and respect; and with regard for health and safety. We offer a range of resources both natural and man-made. We have a range of multi-sensory, multicultural and non-stereotypical resources which are reviewed and replenished regularly.

Observation, assessment and planning - supporting every child

At Shotover Nursery Schools we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending each child's learning and development. This begins by observing the child and assessing their interests and needs before planning challenging, but achievable, activities and experiences to extend their learning and development. Assessment of their achievements helps us plan the next steps for the child and helps to ensure they make the appropriate progress.

Observation is key to planning an appropriately challenging and exciting curriculum. The recording of observations is practicable, organised and well-managed. We use an online learning journal, and an online recording and assessment system. We use information provided by the child's key person, other practitioners, parents and other professionals where appropriate.

We hold weekly planning meetings to enable all staff to contribute towards each child's learning and development, based on their observations. Children also play an important part in planning their own learning.

Long term planning

In our school we use themes appropriate to the interests of our cohort of children and the community to which they belong and review these annually. We also plan for continuous provision. This is a core range of resources that children can use each day throughout the school year.

Medium term planning

Our medium-term plans can run for a few weeks, month or half termly and are based on the needs and interests of the children for all areas of learning and development. Planning details the focus for learning, gives an overview of possible enhancements to continuous provision, the adult focused activities, resources, display and visits/visitors to school. Often themes are used as a vehicle for delivery.

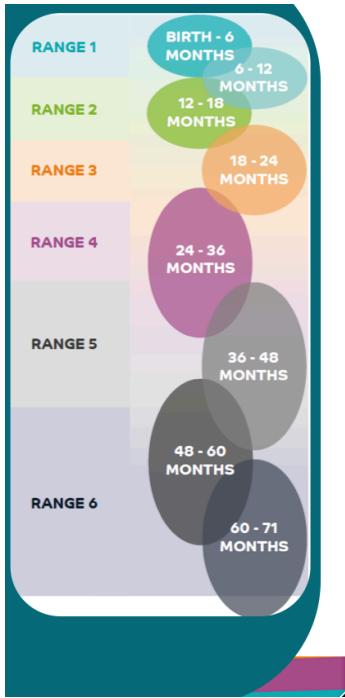
Short term planning

These are written in alternate weeks and detail adult focused and child-initiated learning experiences. It outlines the elements of development, effective learning for children and details prompts for staff linked to observation as well as key language/questions and resources.

Evaluations and next steps determine our planning for subsequent weeks. Where appropriate, reference will be made on short term planning for children with Special Educational Needs or disability linked to their SEN Outcomes Plan, EHC and Individual Learning Plan Personal Education Plan (PEP) or for children we care for (CWCF) linked to their Personal Education Plan (PEP) where appropriate.

Assessment

Staff's on-going assessments form the basis for gathering holistic information on pupil progress. This information is analysed termly and highlights areas for future development. We work with parents throughout the year to ensure that children are emotionally and practically prepared to start Primary school.



The learning environment

A high quality environment is key to success. It is the shared responsibility of staff and children to care for the environment both indoors and outdoors. Staff take pride in developing areas of continuous provision and displays which enhance and broaden opportunities.

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely indoors and outdoors. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The environment is organised into continuous provision areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Our outdoors provision offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers our children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.

Our curriculum is underpinned by the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2025

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf

Governors have an oversight of this policy through regular monitoring visits to the school and meetings.