New Seaham Academy

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2026-2027

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027

Introduction

This policy sets out the aims and objectives of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum at New Seaham Academy (NSA).

At NSA, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident, resilient and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents, carers and other professionals to meet their needs and to help every child reach their full potential.

As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework:

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access an ambitious 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 and any external agencies.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both adult- initiated as well as child-initiated, supported by the adult where appropriate.
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage at New Seaham Academy applies to children in our Reception class. Which has a capacity of 38 children.

Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is important in preparing children for later schooling.

The EYFS sets out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

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.

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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, resilience and independence, as well as placing a focus on children's language and vocabulary skills. We emphasize a love of reading in our curriculum.

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.

4.2 Teaching

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. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for year 1.

In Reception there are daily phonics sessions using the RWI phonics scheme.

5. Assessment

At NSA, 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.

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.

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.

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. Parents meetings and the EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Parental engagement is key to forming a successful home-school partnership. Parent/carers can be involved in a variety of ways:

- Parents/carers support will be positively encouraged and welcomed. This would include interacting and working with the children whilst they engage in activities within school or at home.
- We offer an Early Years café as well as other parent events throughout the academic year which will support the children's learning and provide opportunities for parental involvement.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. Daily risk assessments are completed by a member of EYFS staff. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risk. We adhere to the school policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

Outside agencies are actively encouraged to support the health and welfare of the children in EYFS though working closely with the NSA Inclusion Lead.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children and families about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

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

8. Inclusion

At NSA, we are determined to meet the educational needs of all our pupils, to encourage independence and full participation in the life of the school. A number of pupils will, at some stage of their school career, experience some degree of special educational need.

Working within the guidelines of the Code of Practice, it is our intention that the educational needs of all pupils are identified and provision made to meet these as early as possible. It is expected that all relevant information concerning children with special educational needs will be treated with the appropriate respect and confidentiality.

We value all our children as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports

them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

9. Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the EY practitioners, SLT and other professionals to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

10. Monitoring and review of all policies

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The SLT will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and raise any issues that require discussion. The SLT and other subject co-ordinators will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Mr. S. Bilton, Headteacher September 2026

Review Date: September 2027