



# **The Federation of Spixworth Schools**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy**

Agreed by Governing Body: Autumn 2023

To be reviewed: Autumn 2024

Group responsible: Full Governors

## Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. In Reception at The Federation of Spixworth Schools we create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become resilient, capable, self-assured, confident and independent. The Federation of Spixworth Schools greatly values the important role that the EYFS plays in laying these secure foundations and how it helps a child get ready for their statutory school start as well as preparing them for their future successes in learning and development. Our school values; community; adventure; respect; excellence – 'CARE' – underpin our approach to EYFS.

## The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS is the time in a child's life between birth and age 5. At The Federation of Spixworth Schools we offer provision for children in our Reception classes, aged 4 and 5 years old.

In our Reception classes we follow all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE (2023) '[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)'
- DfE (2023) '[Early years foundation stage profile: 2024 handbook](#)'
- DfE (2023) '[Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage](#)'

This policy operates in conjunction with, but not limited to, the following school policies:

- Relationship and Behaviour policy
- Anti-Bullying policy
- Curriculum policy
- Feedback, marking and assessment policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (including Safer recruitment policy)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Health and safety policy

The 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2023' sets out four guiding principles that shape our approach to educating our youngest children. These are:

- **A unique child** - developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.
- **Positive relationships** - supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- **Enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults - where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- **Learning and developing** - An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

This document also states:

- The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep a child safe and promote their welfare.
- The 7 areas of learning and development which guide professionals' engagement with a child's play and activities as they learn new skills and knowledge.
- Assessments that will inform everyone about a child's progress through the EYFS.
- Expected levels that a child should reach at age 5, usually the end of the reception year; these expectations are the "Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding children will have gained.

Ofsted's 2013 definition of teaching in EYFS is as follows:

*'Teaching is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities, communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment that adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and to monitor their progress.'*

We believe that children should experience a broad and balanced curriculum reflecting their individual needs, interests, enthusiasms and individual learning styles. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. At The Federation of Spixworth Schools we aim that a child's early years' experience is happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and supports their development, care and learning needs.

### **Transition into Reception**

The transition into Reception is carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

- Visits are made, where possible, to all pre-school providers to establish contact with children in their pre-school setting.
- Pre-school children are invited into school for a range of different kinds of 'taster' sessions prior to joining the school.
- All parents are given the opportunity for a home visit from staff to enable their child to build strong relationships with staff prior to starting full time.
- Information regarding school is provided through presentations and videos on the website.
- All families are invited to an 'Introduction to EYFS' presentation. This is an opportunity for staff to explain the school day, routine and procedures and to answer any questions. The ethos of working together is introduced and families are encouraged to discuss any possible worries or concerns at any time during their child's education.
- We encourage parents and pre-school providers to share the child's Learning Story with us.

Reception children start full time in September. The school supports parental choice with regard to part-time transition into Reception, offering morning sessions only in the first instance, if requested and in the best interests of the child. The school works closely with families to quickly work toward full-time entry.

### **Principles into Practice**

#### **A Unique Child**

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, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use positive praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing assemblies and awards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- High quality adult interactions and teaching;
- What our children already know and can do;
- Assurance that that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- Provision of learning opportunities using a range of starting points that meet the needs of young children both indoors and outdoors;
- Provision of a rich and stimulating environment that promotes high levels of language and communication.
- 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 contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

### **Inclusion/Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

All children and their families are valued in our Federation irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. 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 possible 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.

### **Welfare**

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

*“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.” EYFS  
September 2023*

At our school we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023.

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 in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose. This includes educating the children about the school's fire safety procedures throughout the year. Each term a fire alarm test and evacuation takes place.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Spixworth Infant School 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.

### **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their child.

We do this through:

- Individual school tours for prospective parents in the Autumn Term.
- Access to a range of information on the school website.
- Ensuring children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school during transition sessions.
- Home visits from staff in September to build secure relationships.
- An information event for new parents early in the Autumn Term focussing on school routines and providing a question and answer session with staff.
- Asking parents to sign permission slips for visits out of school, photographs of their child for assessment purposes and using the internet at school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns.
- Inviting parents to attend meetings providing information about other areas of the curriculum, e.g. Phonics and early reading.
- There are four parent/teacher progress and target setting meetings throughout the year. We work together to discuss and support your individual child's progress. Parents receive records of these discussions at the time of the meetings and a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers such as performances, night time adventure, book look drops ins, class assemblies and sports Day.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our schools, the EYFS teachers with the EYFS TAs act as 'Key Persons' to all children in EYFS. We value our good links with the feeder preschools and work to ensure a smooth transition for children joining our Foundation Stage classes.

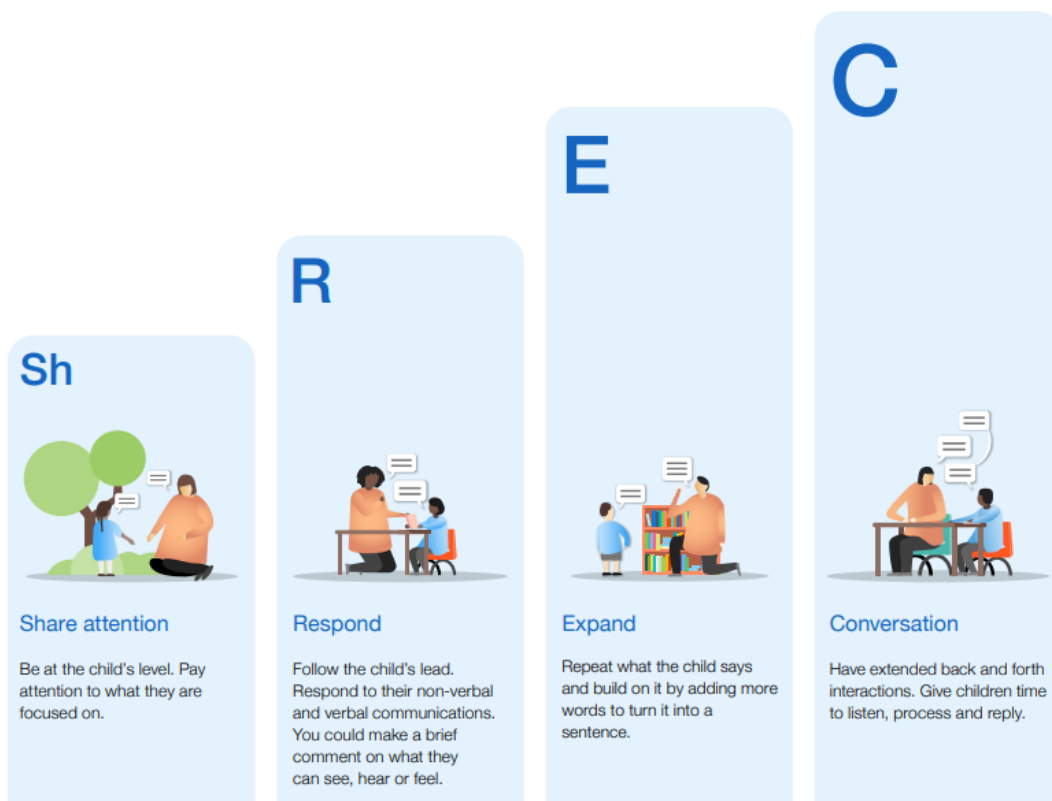
## Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse society.

## Enabling Environments

At the Federation of Spixworth School's we view enabling environments as the 'third teacher' providing an attractive, provocative and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident, secure, challenged and promotes independence. The children have daily access to indoor and outdoor environments that are set up in support of all seven areas of learning and in response to children's own play as planned continuous provision. The outdoor area is an extension of the classroom.

Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interests. Staff are an essential tool in transforming this into learning and challenge in the form of 'sustained shared thinking'. We use the evidence based '[The ShREC Approach](#)' from the Education Endowment Fund (2022).



### **Share attention**

*Showing genuine interest in what a young child is focused on is a powerful way to establish a connection. It lets them know that you value them and want to spend time with them. By getting down to their level and engaging in their choice of activity, you can tune in and crucially pay attention to what they look at, what they do, and what they say. Sensitive joining in with a child's play motivates children to communicate with you.*

### **Respond**

*How we respond to a child once we have established joint engagement is dependent on our knowledge of them as a unique individual. Sensitive, supportive and stimulating responses*

*need to be adaptive and informed by our understanding of the child's development.*

*What might an attuned response look like? Responding involves noticing how the child communicates and acknowledging these verbal or non-verbal communications warmly. It involves being aware of your body language.*

*Responses can involve making appropriate eye contact, looking expectantly, nodding, smiling. Equally, an attuned response could be narrating their activity, a relevant comment that describes what the child can see, hear, feel or articulating the link between their activity and previous learning or experiences.*

#### **Expand**

*Once the 'back and forth' rally of engagement is getting underway: the adult and child are sharing attention, the adult is responsively following the child's lead.*

*This is where modelling and scaffolding begins with the adult pitching their language just above the level of the child. For example, if a child gives a one-word response such as 'dog' the adult should expand on what they say by repeating and building on this utterance by adding a few more words. This helps children to use more complex utterances: 'Yes, it's a dog. A big/small/friendly/brown dog!'. Your knowledge of the child will inform what key word/s may be helpful to model.*

#### **Conversation**

*Sustained back and forth conversations that involve many turns are the goal. The beauty and power of conversation is that it offers children an opportunity to practise talking and to receive feedback from an adult. To encourage rich back and forth conversations, comment more, question less.*

*It is important to note that questions can be useful in helping children to cue turn-taking in conversation. Consider how to use questions sparingly so they are most effective. 'WH' and open questions are the most useful as they invite children to elaborate. As children's conversational skills develop, adults can sensitively challenge children, shaping the conversation to incorporate more abstract topics that are removed from the here and now.*

High Quality Interactions in the Early Year - The ShREC Approach, EEF 2022

Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

To support with a child's learning the classroom and outdoor space will promote personal and social skills, language and mathematical development through displays and material that is on display. It will encourage children to be reflective about their learning and promote high . spaces will be kept neat and tidy to ensure that children can freely access resources promoting their independence and a respect for the space that they are learning in.

#### **Health and Safety**

- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Fresh fruit or vegetables are available daily.
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required and shared with lunchtime staff.
- All staff are first aid trained and records of accidents or injuries are kept according

to school policy.

- All staff are aware of health concerns and/or dietary requirements of individual children.
- Risk assessments of the learning environment and of activities are undertaken and actioned on appropriately.

### **Learning and Development**

Teachers and early years support staff provide the curriculum in the Reception class for up to 45 children. We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals at the end of their Reception year. We use both the EYFS statutory framework and its 'Educational Programmes' and the DfE (2023) 'Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage' to guide planning and provision.

### **Seven Areas of Learning**

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These prime areas are:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The specific areas of development and learning are:

**Literacy**

**Mathematics**

**Understanding the World**

**Expressive Arts and Design**

### **The Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning (COETL)**

At Spixworth Infant School we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

These are;

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go';
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

It is expected that staff's planning ensures that there are opportunities for playing and exploring, being active, and creative and critical thinking.

### **Organisation of learning**

- Children are taught in two Reception classes. Depending on the number of children entering school each year, a decision is made each Summer term as to whether the children will be taught in single or mixed-age classes. The Spixworth Reception



Experience is carefully considered for children in either single or mixed-age classes. Please see Appendix 1.

- 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, confidence, communication and physical development in line with the EYFS guidance.
- As a team, we write long term and medium term plans using the EYFS based on topics derived from a mixture of child initiated interests, seasonal events or expected learning covering all 7 areas of learning and the COETL. These plans are reviewed by the curriculum leader. These plans then inform our short-term planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.
- Children participate in whole and small group activities; these include daily phonics sessions using the Little Wandle scheme, guided and shared reading and writing, Maths and other curriculum activities.
- The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.
- "Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults..." As children move through "...the reception year, there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1."
- 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.
- In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.
- We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

## **Assessment in the Foundation Stage**

### **Reception Baseline Assessments (RBA)**

- All children complete the RBA within 6 weeks of starting in Reception, regardless of the time of year.
- This will take place with the child's teacher and within the classroom setting.
- Information gained is submitted to the DfE for their information. Teachers can make notes about individual children's needs and use this to help them plan appropriately and share with parents if necessary.

### **Ongoing Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations using Tapestry, an online Learning Journal.

Records will include:

- Information about your child's starting point.
- Examples of children's work (mark making, writing, number, drawings etc).
- Photographs and video of children's learning.
- Notelets including observations by staff.
- Notes/work from home submitted by parents/carers.
- Records on Tapestry should reflect all 7 areas of learning.
- Parents have unlimited access to their own child's online account. They can see every

entry made and are encouraged to comment on observations and add their own to provide a full and rounded picture of their child's development.

Senior staff will use assessment information to discuss with teachers each child's progress. Any child identified as not making the desired or expected progress will be targeted for additional support. This may take the form of additional adult support, referrals to other services, meetings with parents/carers, additional or specialised resources or working with the class teacher to adapt provision within the setting to meet the child's specific needs.

We use a thorough and consistent 'observation-assessment-planning' cycle to assess and review child's outcomes. In collaboration with families, we use a 'focus child cycle' for assessment to ensure each child receives a comprehensive, 'deep dive' overview of their progress on a termly, or more frequent, basis. This is used to plan subsequent learning opportunities both in lessons and to adapt the enabling environment to meet children's needs. This process enables all staff and families to have a view of the whole child (see summary in appendix 2). Children's 'WOW' moments are recorded throughout the year, remembering to 'remark on the remarkable' as well as being part of 'focus weeks'.

### **Foundation Stage profile (EYFSP)**

At the end of the EYFS – it is a statutory responsibility of the school to make a 'best fit' judgement for each Reception child against the Early Learning Goals and complete the EYFS profile. This assessment is based on what staff caring for a child have observed over a period of time and what the child's learning is showing when they work independently. A child is judged to be working at 'expected' level or at an 'emerging' level. This information is shared with the Local Authority and with parents/carers in the child's end of year report. Parents/carers are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher.

### **EYFS Data**

As a federation we use a 'point in time' approach to tracking children's progress. 5 times per year children are recorded as; working well below age expected; working below age expected, working at age expected and working beyond/well beyond age expected for that point in the year, considering what they have learnt so far. This information ultimately informs the EYFSP and is shared with parents in the end of year report.

### **Transition into Year 1**

Throughout the school year Reception children access some learning and play areas with Key Stage 1 children. The EYFS and Key Stage 1 teachers work together to plan and deliver many elements of the curriculum.

Over the course of the year, as each individual child is ready, a gradual degree of formality is included into the school day. By the second half of the Summer term, Reception children are included in a greater number of adult initiated activities and have 'taster' sessions where they take on the role of Year 1 children.

In the final term in Reception, the respective teacher and Year 1 teacher liaise to discuss the individual children, their progress and targets and analyse the assessment data to inform planning and ensure the needs of each child continue to be met. Children also have an induction session in the Summer term with their new teacher/class.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Ensuring the school has clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding the Executive Headteacher and EYFS leader to account for the educational performance of its EYFS pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff working in EYFS.
- Ensuring that there are appropriate policies, procedures, and practices in place to deliver the '[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)' in line with statutory requirements.

The Executive Headteacher, Head of School and curriculum leader will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with the '[Headteachers' standards](#)' and the expectations of the school community.
- Creating a culture where children experience a positive and enriching school life.
- Upholding ambitious educational standards which prepare children from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life.
- Ensuring valid, reliable and proportionate approaches are used when assessing children's knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, and ensuring effective use is made of formative assessment.
- Understanding and acting within the statutory assessment frameworks which set out the duties, responsibilities and reporting arrangements to be followed.
- Ensuring all relevant staff read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring that staff have received the appropriate training to deliver and report EYFS assessments.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices and procedures.

The EYFS lead will be responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff members read and implement this policy.
- Ensuring that all staff are up-to-date with current statutory and Ofsted expectations, including the early years team and the SLT.
- Supporting the policies, ethos and vision of the school and actively promoting high levels of achievement in the early years stage.
- Leading the early years team in the planning and delivery of a creative and stimulating curriculum based on the educational programmes of the '[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)'.
- Ensuring the educational provision and practice is based on the EYFS characteristics of effective teaching and learning, supports a range of learning needs and develops children's independence.
- Taking responsibility for high-quality teaching provision throughout the early years stage.
- Ensuring the requirements for the EYFS, including the arrangement of assessment, are met in line with the relevant statutory requirements.
- Monitoring the progress of children and reporting evaluated data to the SLT.
- Developing and maintaining effective relationships with parents, colleagues, the governing board and the local community.
- Ensuring parents are informed about their child's progress, development and targets, and are aware of relevant early years policies, practices and procedures.
- Supporting staff development by identifying and/or providing regular training and CPD opportunities.
- Providing regular 1:1 meetings with staff to support professional development.
- Assigning a key person to support the needs of each child and family.

All teaching staff/the key person will be responsible for:

- Acting in accordance with this policy at all times.
- Understanding and acting within the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.
- Ensuring they have a thorough working knowledge of:
  - The DfE's current '[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)' and the requirements therein.
  - The DfE's current '[Early years foundation stage profile handbook](#)'
  - The STA's current '[Early years foundation stage assessment and reporting arrangements](#)'.
- Using formative and summative assessments to assess, monitor and report on children's progress, plan next steps and shape learning opportunities.
- Identifying any areas of concern relating to children and their learning, development and emotional needs.
- Ensuring that the children they support receive learning tailored to their needs.
- Engaging with parents to support them in guiding their child's development at home.
- Helping families with more specialist support, where required.
- Helping children become familiar with the school and acting as a point of contact for children and their parents.

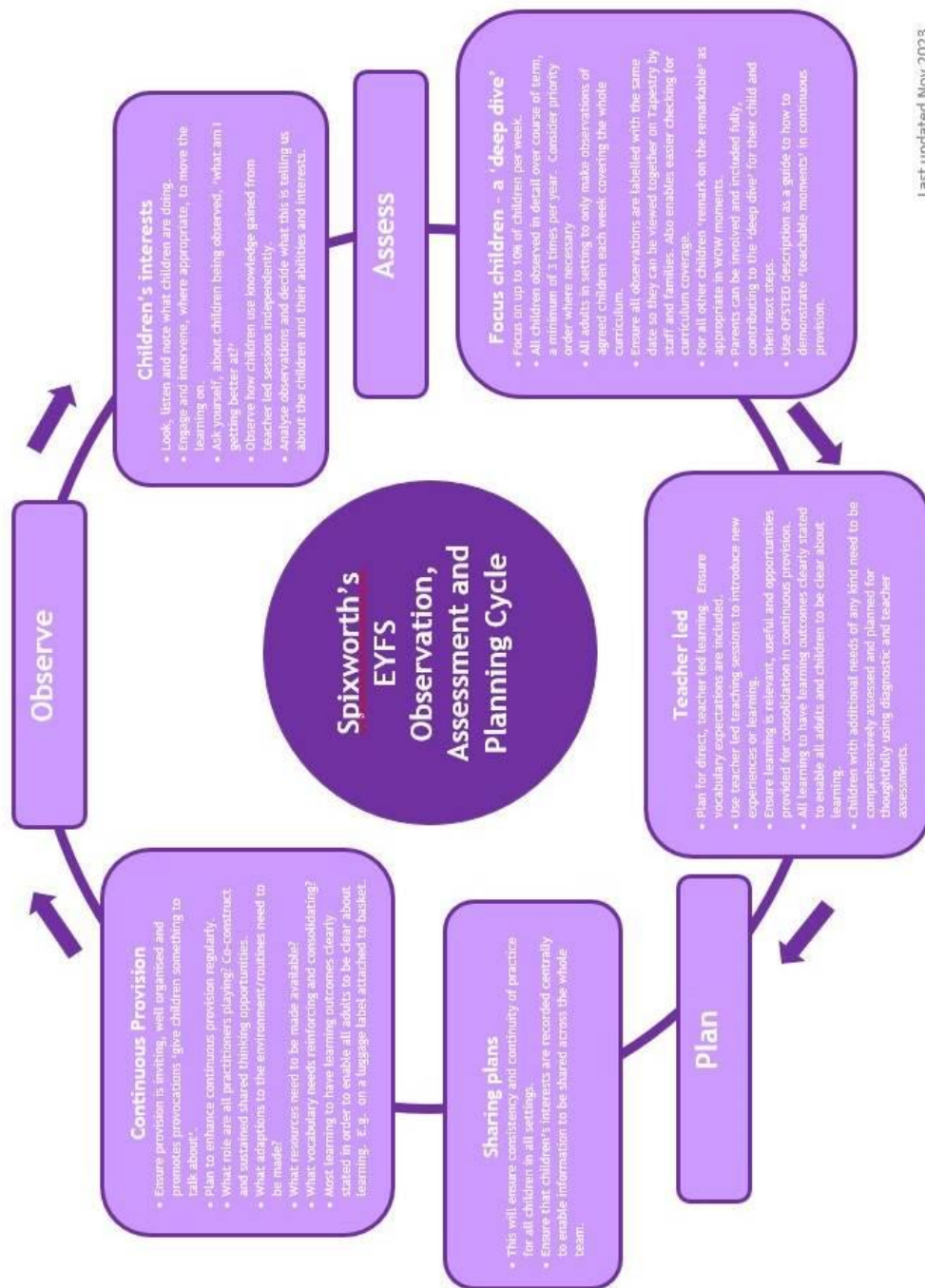
## Appendix 1

### The Spixworth Reception Experience

Year R in single and mixed-age classes	
Autumn 1	Settling/Getting to know me including All About Me
	Baseline assessments, Wellcomm speech and language assessments
	Access to high quality, well planned provision areas
	Adults immersed in play, next steps to be given and support to meet these recorded on Tapestry
	Reading: Children will read in school at least 3 times per week in line with the Little Wandle phonics and reading programme. Reading books will be sent home after this from week 4 'Reading for pleasure' books from the school library will be sent home weekly
	Phonics: The Little Wandle phonics programme will be followed from the first week
	Daily Maths input following Mastering Number and supplemented by White Rose Maths
	One entry per week to adult-led books
	Observations on Tapestry from 7 areas of learning in high quality environments indoor and out
	Join whole school celebration assemblies
Assembly in classrooms	
Autumn 2	Introduce story scribing and acting focusing on language and the use of initial sounds. Copies put in adult-led books
	Weekly adult input including English and Maths
	Introduce PE as music and movement
Spring 1	Introduction of English Books – used following Write Stuff plans
	Assembly in hall
Spring 2	
Summer 1	
Summer 2	Number Masters introduced
	Playtime with KS1

## Appendix 2

### The 'Observation-Assessment-Planning' cycle summary in EYFS



Last updated Nov 2023