The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Starbeck Primary Academy, we welcome children into our Nursery and Reception classes. Nursery children currently attend for 15 or 30 hours a week and Reception children attend for the full school day.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all EYFS children and enable the children to learn through playing, talking, observing and questioning with adults and each other in an environment where they feel valued. Children are offered a curriculum where they can learn through play both inside the classroom and in our dedicated Early Years outdoor areas.

Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children’s development. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong.

At Starbeck Primary Academy we recognise the importance of outdoor learning and believe that young children must have access to outdoor spaces. Outdoor spaces can often free the children from the constraints associated with indoor learning and plays a crucial role in helping children make sense of the world and grasp the basic concepts of science. Our outdoor spaces provide opportunities for the children to move freely and explore, whilst developing an awareness of nature and the natural world.

At Starbeck Primary Academy we use ‘Tapestry’ to record, track and share your child’s learning during their time in Nursery and Reception. This system, called an ‘online learning journal’ enables staff to take photographs, videos and make written observations of the activities the children complete at school. Parents have access to this information so they can celebrate their child’s learning at home too, as well as uploading out of school achievements.

Following recent government guidance that schools should follow a synthetic phonics scheme, we have adopted the ‘Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised’ phonics scheme to teach early reading skills in our school.

Children’s progression in Phonics is directly related to their reading ability. The children are taught phonemes (the letter sounds) and the introduction of new formation phrases. They are taught overt blending, but fluent blending in their heads is the ultimate goal.

The scheme is set out for Reception and Year 1 and children in Year 2 will be continuing their literacy work, alongside lessons for spelling punctuation and grammar (SPAG).

The children will have a daily phonics lesson and three reading practise sessions at school each week. The scheme promotes a love for reading and this is done by sharing books. This is an adult led session which focuses on the three skills of decoding, prosody (reading with rhythm, stress and intonation) and comprehension.