



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Hall Meadow Primary School is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children in school. We believe that pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse. All of our school policies and procedures reflect this priority.

REVIEWED BY EYFS LEAD: March 2018
PASSED BY GOVERNORS: September 2018
NEXT REVIEW DATE: March 2020

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy, Teaching and Learning Policy, Inclusion Policy, Behaviour Policy, Marking and Assessment Policy and the Health and Safety Policy.

Vision Statement for the Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the area of education upon which young children build the rest of their lives. It is an education which encompasses all learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes children from birth until the end of the Reception Year in school.

Children learn in a complex way. They are influenced by everything in their environment, particularly their home life, and they use their senses to explore and to try to make sense of the world around them. By the time children come to school they will already have gained a great deal of skills and knowledge and they will have had a range of different experiences and have varied interests.

Children deepen their understanding by playing, talking, observing, planning, questioning, experimenting, testing, repeating, reflecting and responding to adults and to each other. They learn through play, through interaction and questioning, with adults and other children, and through a variety of planned activities; a fully inclusive Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

The children will gain the learning skills, attitudes and behaviours necessary for them to successfully make the transition into the National Curriculum in Key Stage 1.

This Early Years Foundation Stage Policy should be read in conjunction with the school's policy for Teaching and Learning, Inclusion and the Behaviour Policy.

Specific Aims for Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- To provide children with a safe and nurturing learning environment where they develop high self-esteem and self-confidence
- To allow children to explore their own ideas and interests through play
- To support children in developing key skills and knowledge through the Characteristics of Effective Learning and the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and Development
- To work in partnership with parents to enable each child to achieve their highest potential
- To enable the children to develop positive learning behaviours, skills and attitudes

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum aims to underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- personal, social and emotional well-being within an environment which endorses achievement for all and increases the self-esteem of individuals
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their own learning, including taking responsibility for their learning and behaviour
- reflective skills, including self-assessment and the evaluation of progress
- social skills to enable effective communication and interaction with others in a range of contexts
- respect and tolerance for the rights, beliefs, contributions and values of other people
- attention skills, motivation, concentration and perseverance

As Early Years Foundation Stage practitioners we believe that learning for young children should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which children have opportunities to explore, investigate, discover, create, rehearse, practise, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes through play-based learning.

Principles of Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four key principles:

1. Unique Child: 'Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be capable, confident and self assured.'
2. Positive Relationships: 'Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.'
3. Enabling Environments: 'Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.'
4. Learning and Development: 'Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children

These principles inform our own principles at Hall Meadow Primary School:

- a curriculum relevant to the children and effective practitioners who understand and are able to implement the requirements
- a knowledge that young children develop physically, emotionally, intellectually and socially rapidly and at different rates
- teaching and learning based on what the children already know and can do and then build upon this
- a carefully structured and engaging curriculum which allows opportunities for the children to engage in activities planned by adults and also in those that the children plan and initiate themselves
- well-planned, purposeful activities based on observation will engage children in the learning process
- play-based learning is a crucial component of the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, intellectual and educational development and the acquisition of social and behavioural skills and understanding

Monitoring

This should be in line with the Monitoring and Assessment Policy.

The following criteria will be used to ascertain the implementation and effectiveness of the policy.

Children will:

- have access to a wide range of learning opportunities and experiences, as well as access to resources which support learning
- develop the ability to communicate in verbal and non-verbal ways, clearly and confidently
- develop the ability to make choices and decisions and to move forward having acquired a reasoned set of attitudes, behaviour and values
- develop the ability to increase confidence and independence creating a positive self-image which is self-motivating and independent
- develop lively, enquiring minds by displaying effective enquiry skills and attitudes
- acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and practical abilities that will become a firm foundation for future learning
- be creative and appreciate the creativity of others
- make reasoned decisions and choices
- master basic physical skills and develop control of both gross and fine motor skills
- value and respect the differences between themselves and others
- appreciate the school environment and its community, as well as develop a caring attitude

Guidelines to support the policy

The curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is divided up into seven areas of learning. There are three 'prime areas' and four 'specific areas.'

Prime areas:

1. Communication and Language
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Specific areas:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

"Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1."

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2012)

Teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is a carefully planned balance of direct teaching, small group learning experiences and child initiated play. Effective teaching and learning relies on planning that is informed by observational assessments of children's learning and interests.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

"Characteristics of Effective Learning and the prime and specific Areas of Learning and development are all interconnected." (Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2012, page 5)

We support the children in engaging and learning with other people and their environment through playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically. We believe that these characteristics underpin all learning and development.

Playing and exploring – engagement

Finding out and exploring
Playing with what they know
Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning – motivation

Being involved and concentrating
Keeping trying
Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically - exploring

Having their own ideas
Making links
Choosing ways to do things

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel happy, confident, safe and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to both indoor and outdoor activities and opportunities set up in discrete areas of learning alongside planned continuous provision. The learning reflects the seven areas.

The learning environment is safe and welcoming and facilitates the children's ability to develop skills of independence. It celebrates children's achievements and interests and represents the children within the cohort.

Assessment

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage mainly takes place through observations: both in school and from home. These observations are then used to inform planning and the children's next steps. Observations take place in the form of home observations, narrative observations in school, snapshot observations, observation grids, photographs, films of the children, RAG marking, written marking with the child (using a marking grid) and response to marking, facilitated by the adults and responded to by the children. These observations are recorded using the Interactive Learning Diary (ILD) program which can be accessed by parents at home using unique passwords.

Information and assessments also inform the child's individual statutory assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP). At the end of the Reception Year the EYFSP data and information is then shared with parents and the receiving Year 1 teacher and raw data is sent to the Local Education Authority.

Inclusion

At Hall Meadow Primary School, we believe that Inclusion is about the quality of the learner's experience, how they are helped to learn, achieve and participate fully in the life of the school. Equal opportunities should permeate all aspects of school life, and is the responsibility of every member of the school community. (See the Inclusion Policy). Any concerns are discussed at an early stage with parents and/or carers.

Health and Safety

- Daily class-based risk assessments are carried out for both the indoor and the outdoor learning environments
- Risk Assessments to be completed when off site visits take place to ensure the health and safety of all children and adults. To be checked by Educational Visits Co-ordinator
- Ensure all teaching across the Early Years curriculum is in accordance with all aspects of the school Health and Safety Policy.