



Horton St. Michael's CE First School and Nursery

POLICY FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) 2023/3024

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

At Horton St Michael's, the Early Years Foundation Stage begins when the child reaches the age of three and continues until the end of the Reception year. It is a crucial stage in education, setting the solid foundations of learning.

Aims

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

As outlined in the EYFS development matters:

'When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow. Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support.'

Our high expectations will enable children to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will ensure that all our children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start in Key Stage 1.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2021) and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at **different rates**.

Implementation

The school's Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 3 to 5. Our reception and nursery class children are taught together in a mixed age class for the majority of the time.

We offer a flexible timetable for our nursery children. They can attend morning sessions, afternoon sessions or can stay all day. Parents can choose how many days they would like their children to attend.

We can take up to 23 children in our EYFS class (normally 15 Reception and 8 nursery children). We have one teacher and one teaching assistant attached to this class.

We believe strongly in the importance of keeping our practice up to date. We therefore ensure that all staff working in the EYFS attends courses and training as part of our school's continued professional development.

Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the EYFS Development Matters Framework (September 2021).

The EYFS is based on seven key features of effective practice:

- **The best for every child**
- **High-quality care**
- **The curriculum: what we want children to learn**
- **Pedagogy: helping children to learn**
- **Assessment: checking what children have learnt**
- **Self-regulation and executive function**
- **Partnership with parents**

As part of our best practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Provide early intervention for those who need additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and where needed outside agencies
- Plan challenging learning experiences for all our children, based on the individual needs of the child

- Provide opportunities for our children to engage in adult led learning and self-initiated learning
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors
- Plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning
- Provide early reading opportunities through the teaching of phonics, using the Little Wandle Phonics Scheme.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**

There are four specific areas of learning:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

At Horton St Michael's children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first hand experiences, in which children can explore, think creatively and are active. We provide a well-balanced curriculum and our planning ensures that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area of the EYFS. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful activities and through a mix of adult led and child initiated learning.

We plan a balance between children having time and space in their own child initiated activities and those activities that are planned by adults. During children's play, practitioners build upon the children's learning through suggesting, modelling, demonstrating, explaining, introducing something new, setting challenges observing and questioning the children as appropriate.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Children's engagement when learning, form part of the statutory assessment of the EYFS profile. Part of our daily practice in the EYFS setting is to reflect on ways in which children learn and the ways in which we can facilitate this.

Within the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021, there is a commitment to the following:

Playing and exploring

- finding out and exploring
- playing with what they know
- being willing to have a go

Active learning

- being involved and concentrating
- keeping on trying
- enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically

- having their own ideas
- making links
- choosing ways to do things and finding new ways

Inclusion

All children will receive quality first teaching on a daily basis and activities will be differentiated accordingly. In addition to this where children have been identified as having a specific need intervention programmes will be implemented. Teachers and Teaching Assistants plan programmes together and where needed with liaison with the Special Needs Co-ordinator. (Please refer to the Academy's 'Special Needs Policy' for greater detail).

Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

- Assessments are made in line with the EYFS
- The Reception baseline assessment is carried out on all Reception children within their first 6 weeks in school. This is an assessment on their mathematics, literacy and communication and language.
- Daily practice includes observations of children's development and progress
- Discussions are held with all adults in EYFS about individual children's development and next steps
- An end of year report is provided to all parents/carers on their child's development against the seven areas of learning
- Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's development through our SeeSaw learning blog. Photographs and observations taken at school are shared and parents have the opportunity to share new learning that has taken place at home.

- At the end of Reception children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals for each area of learning

Transitions

We recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both parents and children. To this end we have established a strong set of procedures for transitions to be smooth as possible. All children starting in our Nursery or Reception are offered school visits prior to starting. This gives children the chance to come into school with a familiar adult and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child. We acknowledge each individual child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child, including Nurseries and childminders.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years Staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Health and Safety and Safeguarding

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance and adhere to the school's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme. We also offer a snack of toast every morning. For our Reception children we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with the chef. Nursery children are also welcome to have a school meal and will be invoiced for this through our Parent Pay system.

We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have robust systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal. Fresh water is readily available for all children and all children are provided with their own school water bottle.

Impact

'No job is more important than working with children in the early years'
'When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.'
Early Years Development Matters 2021.

A high quality early years' curriculum ensures that our children show good progress in all areas of learning and development.

- Children extend their own ideas in the environment independently.

- Staff can discuss individual children's progress as they know the children well, where they are at in their development and their next steps.
- Children are supported to become active learners and encouraged to have a go.
- Staff evaluating learning together as a team ensures ownerships and consistency.

Children enter Key Stage One ready to begin the next chapter of the educational journey. They are equipped with a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for future progress through school and life.

This policy is subject to review in the light of further developments and initiatives.

Review Date: September 2024