



Highfield Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2025-26





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Highfield Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

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Highfield Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

“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 life experiences between birth and the age of 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 years learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. In our school, in most cases, Reception children begin attending school full time at the start of the school year in which they turn five.

Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon 4 principles:

- **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 different ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and intrinsic rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive Relationships** – We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships, and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments** – We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the development of the children. Through observations we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning achievable yet challenging activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Learning and Development** – The Reception unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas for children to explore, be active, be creative, be quiet and be inquisitive. All equipment and resources are able to be accessed independently.

Our Intent, aims and objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Highfield Primary School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1, and beyond, and enable choice and decision making whilst fostering independence and self-confidence.

- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress, ensuring quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs.

The early-years education we offer our children is based upon the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Implementation

Learning and Development

Our Foundation Stage curriculum reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals, and the steps that we feel are needed to ensure success. We enrich the Early Years Framework with the Highfield curriculum to enhance the opportunities available to the children. Our teaching of phonics is based upon the Floppy's Phonics scheme.

There are 7 areas of learning. All areas are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation. Children require a balance of adult-led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of the EYFS.

Learning and development is categorised into three prime areas of learning. These are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive:

- Communication and Language – Listening, attention and understanding and Speaking
- Physical development – Fine and Gross motor
- Personal, social and emotional development – Self-regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships

Additionally, there are four specific areas of learning:

- Literacy – Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Numerical Patterns
- Understanding the world – Past and present and People, culture and communities
- Expressive arts and design – Creating with materials and Being imaginative and expressive

Initially the focus will be given towards the Prime areas of learning, but as the year progresses the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning.

Reception children will also access daily phonics sessions, following the 'Floppy's Phonics' scheme and in line with school policy.

Characteristics of effective learning

The characteristics of effective learning underpin achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning. They describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. The characteristics represent processes rather than outcomes. We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates opportunities for these to be shown and developed. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background context when considering developmental and future learning needs.

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 – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Planning and teaching

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Planning objectives are supported by the Development Matters Statements from the Early Years Foundation Stage document. Planning is based upon themes of learning, with discrete phonics, maths and reading teaching. Long term plans state the topics to be covered each year. Medium term plans illustrate the objectives and intended learning, alongside key vocabulary to be taught. Short term plans or weekly plans, show specific activities planned to achieve the objectives.

Through planning, teachers ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the day. During child initiated activities the adults' role is to observe, show an interest in the children's ideas, develop oracy skills, facilitate and share ideas and model different skills. Such interactions with the children are essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and therefore guides new learning. This is then fed back into the planning in order to ensure that the topics being covered reflect the children's interests and that learning is

pitched accurately. By being fluid this allows for spontaneity to become an integral part of our learning.

At specific times of the day the children will take part in an activity that is adult led. Such sessions include daily phonics, reading or maths experiences as well as teaching new skills and concepts to support their learning within the Foundation stage environment. All directly taught sessions and activities are carefully planned and tailored for each group using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and abilities. Planning is adapted regularly ensuring that all teaching and learning is relevant and challenging for each child. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help prepare the children for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Learning through play

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. Children learn best from activities and experiences that they have initiated, and play with peers is important for children's development. We carefully plan our environment and provide opportunities to reflect these interests to inspire them further, whilst also making sure that children also have the opportunity to extend and practise the skills they have learned through direct teaching. Constant opportunities are provided for children to be able to make their own decisions and choices in order that they can become independent, confident and happy learners as soon as is possible for each individual child. Some children will need gentle encouragement in this step as they become comfortable in their new setting.

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, helping them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children at Highfield soon grasp the rules we have in our Foundation Stage. They see the high expectations we have in every aspect of our day and delight in trying to meet these. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. They enjoy risk taking in a controlled and fun way.

Giving children the opportunity to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, allows them to discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. With adult support this process enhances children's ability to think critically and ask questions. Adults can support them in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas, modelling the appropriate use of language and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. Children have the opportunity to be outside during the entire day, unless there are exceptional weather conditions.

The Learning Environment

Foundation Stage classrooms are organised to allow the children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Each classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The Foundation Stage has an enclosed outdoor area, and children have the opportunity to access this area daily. Being outdoors allows opportunities for doing things in different ways

and on different scales to indoors. Learning outside supports the development of healthy and active lifestyles by offering children opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement and promoting a sense of well-being. It gives them contact with the natural world and offers them experiences that are unique to outdoors, such as direct contact with the weather and seasons. Outdoor play also supports children's problem-solving skills and nurtures their creativity as well as providing rich opportunities for their developing imagination, inventiveness and resourcefulness.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress

Assessment is an essential and important part of the Early Years for children's learning and development. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain an understanding of each child's level of understanding. These can be through observations, photographic evidence, examples of work or parental conversations. Formative assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during choosing times when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and adapt any future learning.

Observations are taken using Tapestry App, which allows staff to take photos, videos and to make notes while observing what the children are doing or saying. From such observations we can ascertain what the next steps are for the children. We are then able to share these experiences with the children's parents regularly. This is a two-way process whereby parents may input observations of their own, add comments to post and like observations they can view. As it is an app based 'Online Learning Journey', it is highly accessible as parents can access on mobile phones, tablets as well as on computers. Parents are actively encouraged to be part of their children's learning journey.

Within the first 3 weeks of each child starting school, the statutory Baseline assessment is completed. Reception staff also carry out their own baseline assessments for each child across the 12 strands of learning (Not EAD or UW), using the Development Matters document. This assessment is then repeated in February and at the end of the year. Assessments are collated to track how well the children are progressing. Opportunities for a Parent Teacher Consultation are provided in the Autumn and Spring terms (face to face) and the Summer term (in a written report) to provide information about the child's progress, to talk about the child's strengths, achievements, interests and next steps. These form the basis for the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school.

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 the expected level of development
- Emerging in the expected level of development

A narrative description is also provided for Gross and fine motor skills, Speaking and listening, reading, writing and maths, as well as a long description of each child's PSE development included in the general comment.

We ensure our end of EYFS assessments are reliable through:

- our knowledge of the child gained through observation and interaction
- our environment enabling the child to flourish to reach their full potential
- our assessments ensuring a range of contributors e.g. parents, the school nurse, Speech and Language Therapy and other relevant adults
- in-house moderation across the EYFS team
- moderation within our family of schools, within the Red Kite Alliance and with guidance from the LA.

Induction and Transition

Parents of children who are offered a place in Reception are invited to an induction meeting in June. Children visit for a 'Stay and play' session with their parents / carers after school, one session whilst parents / carers wait onsite before the summer holidays and a school lunch. Staff try to visit the children in their preschool setting wherever possible. If this isn't possible then staff hold a professional discussion with the preschool setting. More settling in sessions will be made available if it is deemed necessary. We endeavour to be flexible. In September another hour long transition visit is held just before the children start school. All children in Reception start in September on a slightly staggered basis. Each child will be given a 'Starting School Pack' and a social story shared through Tapestry which provides lots of useful information and guidance as to how best prepare your child for school.

To ensure the best possible transition we:

- value the parent as the first educator of their child
- make contact with our feeder pre-schools within our new intake to discuss essential information on every child
- share important information about our school during new-parents meeting [?](#)
- use written information sent by pre-schools to inform early planning
- hold a series of 'welcome/taster' sessions for parents and children in June and July
- share information in a transition meeting(s) with key adults for children with additional needs
- meet with every parent and child before beginning school to share important information from home and school (wherever this is possible)
- Assign each Reception child a Year 6 buddy who sends a letter to the child, telling them all about life at Highfield Primary.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1)

Throughout the Reception Year, each children's involvement in the whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage assemblies as well as sharing lunchtimes with the Key Stage 1 children on the field.

Relationships the Reception children build with their Year 6 buddies are vital in easing the transition into the main playground during the Summer term. The Year 6 children are there to support, aid and guide the Reception children in exploring their new environment.

Children have the opportunity to explore their new classroom with their Reception teacher. A clear transition plan is in place for all children in school, including 2 'moving up mornings', social stories for each classroom and information shared about new class teachers.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Highfield Primary recognises the huge importance of establishing effective relationships with parents/carers in ensuring that children achieve their full potential. Parental involvement is actively encouraged. Parents are very welcome to chat to staff prior to the start of the school day or at the end of the school day giving them opportunities to discuss any concerns with staff. Staff ensure that parents are well informed about the curriculum their child is experiencing through Tapestry, curriculum meetings, curriculum newsletters, parent mail, the notice board and the school website. Staff take the opportunity at the end of the day to talk to parents about significant achievements or any concerns.

Throughout the year, parents are invited to attend workshops that help support their child's development at home. Parents are very welcome in the Reception classroom talk about interesting pets, hobbies or jobs.

Stay and play / stay and craft sessions, 'Watch us learn' opportunities and book looks are all opportunities where parents are welcome to spend time in school.

Intimate care

'Intimate' care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending upon a child's stage of development, there may be need for some support, for example changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and the school nursing team will be informed should school have any concerns.

Where children need support regularly from staff, an individual intimate care plan will be written and shared with parents.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

All children 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, including Speech and language therapy. Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children who are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs policy. The school's SEND co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

The needs of children with English as an additional language will be met through language support groups, key vocabulary books that are sent home and classroom support.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is

valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.

Safeguarding and Children's Welfare

Children learn best when they are happy, safe and feel secure. We aim to ensure that all children feel happy, safe and secure through the continuous development of positive relationships between children and staff as well as relationships with their peers. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance. Our school has rigorous Safeguarding and welfare policy and procedures that are used to identify anyone at risk or harm of radicalisation that sets out clear procedures for reporting any concerns. See our Schools Safeguarding Children Policy and Child Protection Policy.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to teach children that in society, as in a classroom, there is a need for boundaries, rules and limits to which we all need to adhere to help us stay safe. We aim to teach children to be consciously aware of their feelings and the feelings of others and how to manage their own behaviour by identifying behavioural issues and using them as a teaching moment. We also aim to teach our children to take risks whilst learning how to recognise and avoid hazards. An emergency contact form is completed for all children on entry into school, which includes medical, personal and social details. Should accidents occur on school premises these are recorded in the School Accident Book and parents are informed through a slip sent home.

The Reception Team

Our Reception team consists of experienced teachers and teaching assistants who are highly skilled in early years teaching. They understand the needs of the young children and how best to create a language rich environment to enable a love of learning. Our aim is that it is hard to distinguish between the teacher and the teaching assistant in our setting. Everyone works as a team towards the same goal; to ensure that every child achieves to their highest ability by learning through play and enjoyment. New staff will follow the school induction policy.

Monitoring

The Early Years Leader is responsible for the monitoring of this policy. Areas for development are incorporated into the School Improvement Plan as necessary.

Impact

We recognise that every child is unique and that they develop and learn in different ways and at varying rates. We want all of our children to develop a positive attitude to learning, and therefore we strive for our children to become curious, resilient and self-assured in order to prepare them for the next stage of education, laying secure foundations for future learning and development.