

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

**HIGHTERS HEATH
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

November 2016

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 experiences between birth and age 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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up." **The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Highters Heath Community School, all children join our Reception class, full time, at the start of the school year in which they are five years old, after a two week period of staggered entry.

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage learning and development requirements comprise:

Seven areas of learning and development:

Consisting of 3 prime areas:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

And 4 specific areas, through which the 3 prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

Children's progress and attainment is assessed against the early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year. Appropriate provision is made during the course of the year for those children who are exceeding the ELGs.

Many children who come to our school have been to other pre-school settings in our community with which we have strong links.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- We enable children to make an effective transition from home to school;
- We build on what our children already know and can do;
- We ensure that all children are included and their interests and needs are catered for;
- We offer a structure for learning that supports a range of starting points;
- We provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- We provide a rich and stimulating environment which reflects the changing needs of our children.

"Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments." **Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014**

The four themes of the EYFS underpin our practice. These themes are:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Highters Heath Community School 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, 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/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within our school. All children and families at Highters Heath Community School are treated fairly. Diversity in race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and abilities are celebrated. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and individual interests when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic, but challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We work closely with outside agencies such as: speech and language therapy, educational psychologists and family support workers to support our work to ensure that children's needs are fully met.

Welfare

"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." **The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014**

At Highters Heath Community School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years FoundationStage 2014.

At Highters Heath Community School:

- We promote the welfare of children;
- We promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill;
- We manage behaviour effectively in line with our whole school Restorative Approach to behaviour;
- We ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so;
- We carry out half-termly 'Supervision Meetings' for practitioners.
- We ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose;
- We ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs;
- We maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At Highters Heath Community School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

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 school all Reception children have a key person who they regularly 'check-in' with each day. We have good links with pre-school settings in our community. Visits are undertaken by the Reception class teacher, Teaching Assistant, Assistant Head Teacher and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). The EYFS teacher meets with pre-school staff to discuss children who will be starting at our school. Staff and children from pre-school are invited to school events (Christmas productions etc). Wherever possible we seek the opportunity to meet pre-school staff to share children's learning journals, supporting a smooth continuation of the learning journey.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education. At Highters Heath Community School:

- We talk to parents about their child before their child starts in our school;
- We visit all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- We provide the children with opportunities to spend time with their teacher before starting school through our visits to pre-school settings, and 'stay and play' visits for children to our school;

- We invite all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- We ask parents to share their children's 'Wow Moments' from the six week holiday period prior to them starting school, and use this information where appropriate, to inform baseline assessments on entry to school;
- We offer weekly 'Parent Pop-In' sessions which provide parents with regular opportunities to share their child's 'Learning Time' experiences in Reception class and develop an understanding of their child's learning and development throughout the year. Children and parents enjoy sharing current learning in these sessions, and can reflect on and add to the children's individual learning journals.
- Parent's are encouraged to observe and record what they see and hear while their child is learning in: parent pop-in sessions, INSPIRE workshops and homework activities. These records are then included in individual children's learning journals.
- We invite Reception parents to a coffee morning early in the Autumn term, this provides a valuable opportunity for parents to meet, and find out more about our school through the school's Learning Mentor.
- We invite parents to three INSPIRE workshops during the year. The first workshop introduces parents to our approach to teaching phonics and provides guidance for supporting their child with reading at home. The following two will address other curriculum areas.
- We have a pro-active approach to communication with parents and encourage parents to talk to their child's teacher if there is important information to convey.
- We invite parents to a formal meeting each term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and attainment.
- We provide parents with a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- We consider alternative methods of communication to suit parents who we are not able to see regularly.

Enabling Environments

At Highters Heath Community School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Following our initial discussions with parents and pre-school settings, we observe the children and assess their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

We make regular observations and assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and children's interests. These observations and assessments are recorded in children's individual Learning Journals. Children are encouraged to talk about their interests on a daily basis, and this informs the planning process. We actively involve children in planning

activities that can be used as part of our learning journey together. Children's well-being and involvement are closely monitored during the year using the Leuven Scales, to ensure that the Early Years environment is effectively enabling all pupils' learning engagement and enjoyment.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or quiet. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Children have free access to water and fruit in the 'Snack Cafe' throughout the day, and can access toilets independently whenever they need to. Children are encouraged to make links in their learning by selecting what they need from different learning areas in order to develop their play, and apply skills that they have learned in different contexts. The EYFS classroom has its own enclosed outdoor learning area to develop all areas of learning throughout the year. This has a positive effect on the children's learning and offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales. The children use other spaces within the school for 'Learning Time' such as: Forest School, the ICT suite, the Key Stage 2 hall for PE and the Library. Trips and visits are planned to extend and enhance children's learning throughout the year.

Learning and Development

At Highters Heath Community School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Learning and Teaching

Our policy on learning and teaching defines the features of effective learning and teaching in our school.

Early Years teaching in our school includes whole class teaching, working with small groups or individuals and on-going observation and assessment. Early Years learning and teaching involves:

- partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- **carrying out thorough baseline assessments during the children's first 6 weeks of school. This is essential to make sure that: individual pupil's needs are identified quickly, and children's learning progress and attainment is tracked accurately from their attainment on entry to ensure all pupils make at least 'expected' progress.**
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards and beyond the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;

- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the use of enquiry based approaches to learning, such as: 'Philosophy for Children';
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations and assessments, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Characteristics of Effective Learning

"The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment - playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically - underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner." **Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014**

There are characteristics of effective early learning that are assessed and reported on during the Reception class year as the children learn and develop. These are:

Playing and Exploring – Engagement

Finding out and exploring

- Showing curiosity about objects, events and people
- Using senses to explore the world around them
- Engaging in open-ended activity
- Showing particular interests

Playing with what they know

- Pretending that objects are things from their experience
- Representing their experiences in play
- Acting out experiences with other people

Being willing to 'have a go'

- Initiating activities
- Seeking challenge
- Showing a 'can do' attitude
- Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning from failures

Active Learning – Motivation

Being involved and concentrating

- Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time
- Showing high levels of energy, or fascination

- Not easily distracted
- Paying attention to details

Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

- Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals
- Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result
- Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise

Keep on trying

- Persisting with activity when difficulties occur
- Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off
- Trying hard

Creating and Thinking Critically – Thinking

Having their own idea

- Thinking of ideas
- Finding ways to solve problems
- Finding new ways to do things

Making links

- Making links and noticing patterns in their experience
- Making predictions
- Testing their ideas
- Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect

Choosing ways to do things

- Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task and reach a goal
- Monitoring how effectively things are going
- Changing strategy as needed
- Reviewing how well the approach worked

There are seven curriculum areas of learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to the

development of each child. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Learning intentions for 'Learning Time' are made clear to children, and their child initiated activities are closely monitored to ensure they access the wide range of learning experiences available. There is a careful balance of child initiated and adult-led activities which is flexible.

The structure of the day ensures that the amount of 'Learning Time' is maximised, prioritising time for children to explore, experiment and practise their new skills and learning.

As part of the smooth transition to Key Stage 1, more structured literacy and mathematics sessions are put into operation by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. In addition to this, during the Summer term the Y1 and EYFS teaching staff work closely together to plan for a positive transition for all children. Changes that will occur to routines and methods of learning are carefully considered, and the Y1 curriculum and its delivery is planned to meet children's needs effectively, building on their learning within a structure they feel confident with.

Monitoring and review

The EYFS team regularly monitor and review practice and provision, by:

- Regularly reviewing children's progress and attainment;
- Regularly auditing resources and learning areas;
- Regularly reviewing Learning Journals;
- Attending local Early Years Network meetings;
- Attending Local Authority moderation meetings;
- Ensuring practitioners are well informed of current Early Years good practice and National developments for this Key Stage.

It is the responsibility of the EYFS team to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head Teacher and EYFS coordinator will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.