



HEYFORD PARK
FREE SCHOOL

BONUM COMMUNE COMMUNITATIS

HEYFORD PARK FREE SCHOOL

Early Years
Foundation Stage
Policy

October 2017





HEYFORD PARK FREE SCHOOL EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Aims of the Policy:

- To explain the aims and purposes of the Foundation Stage at Heyford Park Free School
- To set out key points of the EYFS which link to our statutory responsibilities and which make us distinctive

The Purpose of the Foundation Stage:

- To give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations on which to foster a deep love of learning
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences and give them the opportunity to consolidate, explore and experiment
- To enable each individual child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop to the full, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development
- To encourage children to develop independence within a calm and secure atmosphere
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals and challenges.

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available from the school office or to download at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three key areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and to thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3). These support children's learning in all other areas and are known as The Prime Areas. The four remaining areas of learning are known as The Specific Areas. These develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The Prime Areas of Learning

- Communication and Language – Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- Physical Development – Moving and Handling and Self-care
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self-confidence and Self-awareness.

The Specific Areas of Learning

- Literacy – Reading and Writing
- Mathematics – Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures

- Understanding the World – People and communities, The world and Technology
- Expressive Arts and Design – Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The Nursery and Reception teachers plan activities within the Nursery and Reception classrooms and outdoor environments with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

Deeper learning is encouraged through:

- Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of small group, adult-led, adult-initiated and child-led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self-selecting activities while rotating around the four designated 'learning zones', the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing while encouraging them to explore and test their ideas. In some situations, the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them; at other times adults will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible. By the summer term in Reception, the children will experience many more adult-directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn most from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using information gathered during Autumn term home visits, individual 'All About Me' booklets and discussions with individuals and groups, we include children's interests to provide stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play and adult-led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. This looks quite different in the Nursery and Reception classes. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a group or class. In these regular focus sessions children develop skills in maths, literacy, phonics and PSED. Class sessions include stories which help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc...

Reading

We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a secure knowledge of phonic and word skills to equip them for reading in the future. We plan for a whole class story each day but there are many opportunities to enjoy books throughout the day. Every child is encouraged to have their own book bag and learning pot, which is used to learn new and unfamiliar words. Children have one-to-one reading time with a member of staff each week.

Planning

We believe children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and stimulating choices of topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Our topics are based on a variety of areas of learning and range from 'All About Me' to 'Our Wonderful World'. School themes and local or national events, e.g. the Olympics, are also included throughout the year. We ensure a wide variety of festivals and celebrations are covered and also have a focus Value each week. Staff plan in detail on a weekly basis. Evidence is collected in the form of secure electronic notes, observations and photographs which are shared with parents on a half-termly basis. Our interactions with children, along with electronic evidence shared from home, help to inform planning for the next steps in learning. Weekly plans are displayed in the classroom and regularly summarised in the weekly Primary newsletter.

Visits and visitors

Visitors really enhance a topic and we like to have professionals come in to talk to the children. These can come from a variety of walks of life, and may talk about health, safety, animals, celebrations in a variety of cultures, or many other areas. In addition, we believe that off-site visits can contribute to making topics come alive for children. We actively seek parent/carer support on trips, aiming for a ratio of one adult for two children in Nursery and a minimum of 1:5 in Reception. For safety, younger siblings are not allowed to come along on school trips.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with well-organised and clearly-labelled resources to ensure children can access them and tidy them away independently. Each 'learning zone' is set up to provide children with experiences and activities across all of the seven areas of learning. We have areas for writing, maths, creative arts, books, fine motor/malleable, sand and water, role play, dressing up, construction, small world, phonics, puzzles/games, fruit/drinks, carpeted teaching areas and an outdoor learning area for all weathers. A variety of activities are planned and set up in the different areas each day. Each adult is based in a specific 'learning zone' during morning sessions to teach, model, interact and make observations linked to the planned focus within an area of learning.

The outdoor area is an important part of the learning environment. Outside learning will always have a balance of adult focus activities or challenges with free child-led exploration to follow.

In Nursery, physical activity often dominates, with climbing, running, cycling and other active games being key. The Reception class often have more physical play during lunchtime, P.E. and occasional extra sessions in the KS1 playground or using the larger climbing equipment.

Personal belongings and independence

In Reception, each child has their own labelled peg in the corridor and drawer in the classroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their personal belongings in the correct place.

Reporting, Assessment, observations and portfolios

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of understanding, personal achievements, interests and learning styles. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their individual pupil profiles. We are proud to share our developing profiles with families throughout the year. These are photographic collections of children's work and ongoing daily observations which create a detailed picture of the child.

Parents and carers play an active part in submitting photographic evidence directly to the profile. Teaching staff view pending evidence from home and submit it to the profile with achieved learning objectives attached. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. Staff use iPads to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. The completed profile is sent to parents or carers when their child leaves our EYFS setting.

On entry to Nursery and Reception, we carry out baseline assessments for each child. The Class Teacher submits baseline, termly assessments and end of term assessment data to the Head of Primary, showing each child's development across the seven areas of learning. The class teacher will track the progress of each child individually to monitor any dip, stagnation or acceleration in learning. This enables planning for swift intervention activities to ensure expected progress continues. Parents and carers are invited to Parent evenings twice each year to discuss pupil progress or concerns and receive two 'snapshot' reports at these times. At the end of Reception, the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report.

Role of staff and key worker

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents or carers. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes. There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be as consistent as possible in who covers these absences.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as whole school 'Open Days' we offer a 'Meet the Teacher' session before the school year starts and hold a 'Curriculum Evening' and other sessions for parents.

New cohort – the beginning of the Reception year

When a child gains a place at Heyford Park Free School we ask them to attend an induction session at the school alongside all other children who will be starting. We give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer and this document is the first step in getting to know each child as an individual. We offer a staggered entry into Nursery if families feel this is necessary, although many children are ready to plunge straight in. Entry to Reception is slightly staggered with week one consisting of half a day, week two half day plus staying for lunch and week three full time.

Health & 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 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE00337-2014.pdf

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the

regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's profiles, in class displays and on the school website if parents have given permission. All parents and carers are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a Government scheme. Children in Nursery have the opportunity to stay and eat their own packed lunches in the setting. Reception children are provided with a hot school meal and have the choice of a packed lunch if preferred.

All accidents are recorded and a note sent home if justified. Staff will monitor children carefully and call home if a child has a significant bump to their head. We have first aid boxes in each area and cold compresses stored in the EYFS freezers.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e. wet themselves) and have some small stocks of spare clothes and change if needed. We ask parents to help keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets. Nursery families are asked to provide one or two full changes of clothing to ensure children experience very little discomfort or delay during their toilet training periods.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our staff and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. There is an annual external check of equipment.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy). Vicky Wallington is Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Whole School and Rebekah Dallas for Primary. School Principal (Karen Healey) and Head of Primary (Rebecca Hughes) are also Safeguarding Officers and all concerns are discussed within this Senior Leadership Team. Mrs Jennifer Walker is EYFS Leader at Heyford Park Free School. She can be contacted with any concerns and these will be shared with SLT.

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.