



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Approved by:	Full Governing Body
Last reviewed on:	April 2025
Next review due by:	April 2026



Contents

1 Introduction	2
2 INTENT -Aims of the EYFS	2
3 IMPLEMENTATION Our Practice – Learning and Teaching	3
The Early Years Curriculum	3
Planning	3
4 Child-Initiated learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
5 Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage	5
6 Assessment	5
7 The Role of Parents	6
8 Resources	6
9 Safety/Welfare	6
10 Conclusion	7
11 Monitoring	7

1 Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school, children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

Most children enter school with some pre-school experience and have attended one of a range of pre-school settings in our community. Close links are maintained with our pre-school settings and parents to ensure happy transitions and the transference of information.

At Hermitage Primary School, we greatly value the importance of the Early Years in laying the foundations for future learning and development. Learning for children in the Reception Class gives them opportunities to explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate building on what children already know.

2 INTENT -Aims of the EYFS

The curriculum of the Early Years underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's **Characteristics of Effective Learning**:

- Encouraging children to **play and explore** – to be willing to have a go or to take a risk, to show curiosity, to take on roles and to seek challenges
- To develop children as **active learners** – to show high levels of fascination, to focus and pay attention to details, to persist on a challenging activity and to show satisfaction in meeting goals/being proud of what they have achieved.
- To be **creative and critical thinkers** – to think of ideas and how to solve problems, to make predictions and links, to test out their ideas, to change strategy and review their approach.
-

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for the EYFS'

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential'

3 IMPLEMENTATION Our Practice – Learning and Teaching

We follow the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2024** document (Department for Education 2024). The Early Years' education we provide for our children is based on the following principles which underpin effective practice in our care and development of young children and their learning. These principles are the 4 main themes in the Early Years Foundation Stage framework:

- **Each Child is Unique** – every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- **Positive Relationships** – children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
- **Enabling Environment** – children learn and develop well in an enabling environment in which their experiences respond to their needs and there are positive relationships between staff and parents/carers
- **Learning and Development** – children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and with their different needs being met

The Early Years Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our knowledge of the children in each cohort and their needs, interests and stage of development in the seven areas of learning and development to enable the children to reach the Early Learning Goals. All 7 areas of learning are interlinked and we plan cross curricular topics which include:

The 3 PRIME areas of learning –

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

And the 4 SPECIFIC areas of learning-

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

Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the **Educational Programmes** will be delivered and how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice. It draws upon secure knowledge of each child's development and is further informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning. Planning is further informed by using the non-statutory guidance **Development Matters**. All practitioners who work in reception are involved in this process.

Children will engage in whole group and small group activities alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class learning.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'*.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors.

Learning for young children is based on each child's needs, their ideas and developmental phase. In our setting we give children opportunities to investigate, create, practise, rehearse and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills and understanding. The general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents – sharing information
- The balance of Child Initiated play (which is supported and structured by adults) and focused learning which is Teacher Led
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how that affects their teaching linked to the next steps in each child's learning
- The range of resources and opportunities used that provide first-hand experiences
- The provision of an environment where children can take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- Encouraging children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop as independent learners
- Staff who support learning with the provision and maintenance of appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor equipment
- The formation of good relationships between our school and pre-school settings through Early Years Cluster group meetings and visits to school by pre-school as well as visits by the reception class teacher to see the children in their pre-school setting prior to beginning school
- Identifying training needs of all staff working within the Early Years
- To continually review our provision through - ongoing audits on resources and areas of learning, internal and external moderation, cluster group discussions and the sharing of good practice.

4 Child-Initiated learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to facilitate learning and skill development, or to stretch and challenge them further.

'Play is essential for 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.'

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so, we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and 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 experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Aims

- To give children time to become engrossed in activities.
- To provide a balance of planned activities with appropriate intervention by practitioners.
- To engage children in purposeful learning experiences.

- To observe and respond to children in independent learning activities.
- To provide an exciting and enabling environment with a wide range of learning experiences and areas set aside for different types of play.
- To use resources which enrich and inspire each child.
- To take the lead from children

The Role of the Practitioner

- To plan and resource a challenging environment with areas for learning.
- To support the children in their learning when appropriate
- To extend and support children's spontaneous play.
- Extend and develop children's language and communication skills –through conversations and dialogue

In play activities children should:

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them to make sense of their world.
- Practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills.
- Learn how to develop self-control and understand the needs of others and the need for rules.
- Develop social skills by interaction and co-operation.
- Take risks.
- Think creatively and imaginatively.
- Develop communication skills/investigating and solving problems.

5 Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS we set realistic and 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 and children from all social and cultural backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence using the look-listen-note model
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities and resources to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which children feel confident to develop their own learning
- Valuing children as individuals
- Using resources which are diverse and well maintained
- Monitoring progress and taking actions to provide support or extension challenges where appropriate with 1:1 support when needed.

6 Assessment

On entry to school all children are assessed. Assessments are collected through observation and interaction with the children and from directed tasks with an adult. These are used to plan the next steps for individuals and groups of children.

In the first 6 weeks children will be assessed using the statutory **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)**.

The ongoing cycle of planning activities and reviewing children's attainment will be used to build judgements as to whether children are 'on-track' and support interventions will be planned accordingly. The importance of staff knowing the children and their next steps is vital.

At the end of the year the **EYFS Profile** provides a summary of every child's development and learning based on if children have attained the Early Learning Goals in the 17 aspects of learning (If a child has attained the first 12 ELG's then they will have achieved a Good Level of Development (GLD)). In house and cluster moderation will be undertaken to ensure consistency.

The information will be shared with parents in the end of year report and with the Year 1 teacher in the Transition process and feed in to groups and planning for Year1.

7 The Role of Parents

We believe that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child.

We recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating their children.

We do this through:

- Holding an induction evening for parents prior to their child starting school and talking to parents about the information booklets we provide
- Ensuring the children have the opportunity to meet their teacher before starting school – half-day visits for the children/parents and visits to pre-school settings by the class teacher.
- Inviting Parents into school to have a 1:1 meeting with the class teacher to help with their child's transition.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress – there is a formal parents' evening each term.
- Inviting parents to 'Learn With Me' sessions twice a year with a curriculum focused activity, including phonics and maths.
- Sharing expectations for attendance - due to the fast pace of the curriculum and to ensure there are no gaps in learning, there is an expectation that all children will attend school full-time from September.
- Regularly updating the Reception class web page
- Sharing planning - planning will be displayed in the classroom and shown on our web page and include information about how to help your child at home.

8 Resources

We create a stimulating, learning environment, both indoors and outdoors using a wide range of resources. Risk assessment reviews and daily safety checks are made by a member of staff. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the resources, as we believe this encourages independent learning. An informal environmental area and resource audit is completed on a regular basis.

9 Safety/Welfare

In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and in our curriculum we teach children how to take risks and follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the EYFS and understand we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children
- Promote good health
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately
- Ensure all adults working with children are fit to do so
- Ensure the environment and all equipment is safe.
- Ensure access to water all day and have healthy fruit snacks
- Ensure the EYFS staff have the Paediatric First Aid qualification

10 Conclusion

Through our policy we have emphasised the importance we place on early learning and the quality of provision based on the children's ideas, needs and stage of development.

We aim to ensure the successful integration of education and care, seeking to foster self-reliance, social skills, confidence, independence and enjoyment alongside academic attainment.

11 Monitoring

This policy is reviewed annually and approved by the Governing Body.