



EYFS Policy



Introduction

At Highters Heath Community School, we believe that every child should be nurtured in a safe and stimulating environment. We strive to ensure that all children are given the opportunity to enjoy their childhood, acquire a love of learning and develop firm foundations that can be built upon in years to come.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is the stage of development and education for children from birth to five years of age, which in Highters Heath Community School, is our Reception class. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a distinct and important phase in education. It places an equal priority on supporting children's social and emotional development, and their learning. The early years are the crucial time for developing children's enjoyment of learning, their engagement and motivation. It's an important time for children to develop their ability to persist and show determination. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing, teaching and talking.

Aims/Objectives

At Highters Heath we aim to provide motivating first-hand experiences whilst encouraging children to build resilience, ambition, and a lifelong love of learning. We aim to build on the knowledge and skills children already have when they arrive and are actively developing our provision to best suit the needs of each cohort of children that arrive to our school. We recognise that all children are unique, celebrating and welcoming differences within our school community. Our curriculum is well planned, progressive, and follows the interests of the children in the current year group. We are passionate about children leading and immersing themselves in their learning. We aim to embed a language of learning based on the characteristics of effective learning, we want our children to become confident and independent learners.

We aim to:

- Provide a curriculum that offers children a wide range of opportunities ensuring that we do not expect children to aspire to things they have never encountered. We will work on broadening their experiences providing opportunities to try new things and encouraging them to relish a new challenge.
- Provide high expectations encouraging them to develop perseverance and self-belief so that they can problem solve and achieve far more than they expected.
- Provide a learning environment that helps children achieve their potential and support those who need additional help to maximise their chances of achieving the Early Learning Goals.
- Provide children opportunities to develop their sense of wellbeing and ability to regulate their feelings so that they feel confident in our community and are equipped with all the tools they need to transition to Year 1 effectively.

Statutory Framework of EYFS

At Highters Heath Community School, we adhere to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and shape our practice following the four guiding principles. These are:

- 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 build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children learn and develop at different rates. The framework covers the education in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play and high-quality interaction as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2023. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1. These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication, and physical development.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met.

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

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'*.

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 stretch and challenge them further. Opportunities to develop and extend their vocabulary are interwoven throughout the day.

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 and provide children with opportunities to learn both indoors and outdoors throughout the day.

OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

As part of our daily practice, we converse with children and observe and assess their development and learning. We use these interactions and observations to inform our future plans and consolidate and extend learning.

Staff working in EYFS have a secure knowledge and understanding of all pupils and are aware of their stages of development and their next steps. Observations (both formal and informal) and discussions are used to inform the EYFS Profile/Development Matters bands. The children's progress is reviewed continually. Throughout their time in Reception, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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 expected levels of development.
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

SAFETY INCLUDING SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE REQUIREMENTS

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Highters Heath Community School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

In Reception we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately.
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the environment is safe, and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose.
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms, only the class iPads are used to photograph children and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs. We ensure we are GDPR compliant with the production of any videos or photographs of the children.

Highters Heath Community School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role.

We have members of staff that hold the Paediatric First Aid qualification, which is a statutory requirement of the EYFS.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Highters Heath Community School. Staff have access to the CPOMS safeguarding system to log any concerns regarding any aspects of safeguarding and behaviour. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns.

INCLUSION

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve the Early Learning Goals.

We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with the SENCO, parents/carers and outside agencies.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS/CARERS

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Holding information sessions before the children start school.
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school (our 'stay and play sessions' and home visits).
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions.
- Inviting them to a parents meeting in the Autumn and Spring Terms to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning.
- Inviting parents into school to attend workshops.
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books.
- Providing a termly newsletter that highlights how they can support their child at home.
- Providing parents with an end of year report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile.
- We also draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting visitors into our setting.

TRANSITIONS

Transitions are carefully planned for, and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. The Reception children spend time with their new Year 1 teacher in their new classroom. Our staff also contact the local nurseries and preschools, to familiarise themselves with the new children.

Parents/carers are encouraged to take up the offer of meeting with Reception staff in school. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have. We also conduct home visits before children start school.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data and writing books are sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers can plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class.

Monitoring of the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. The Assistant Headteacher is responsible for monitoring provision, teaching and learning and children's progress.

Information is shared with the Head teacher and the EYFS team as appropriate and any necessary actions are taken.

All adults in the EYFS team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of professional growth targets.

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