

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

# **HIGHGATE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**EARLY YEARS AND  
FOUNDATION STAGE  
POLICY**

**2020**

**EYFS Policy September 2020**

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## **1. Introduction**

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Highgate Community Primary School.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at Stathern Primary School. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS. In the National Curriculum this is referred to as the Reception Year Foundation 2 (following on from pre-school experience as Foundation 1).

In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting.

## **2. Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

In the EYFS setting at Highgate Community Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates - physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them.
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community.
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differ to their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development.
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.
- Building positive relationships with parents and ensuring a strong school/home link.

## **3. The Early Years Foundation Stage framework**

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Highgate Community Primary School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012 and updated Sept 2017). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and "Learning and development." -

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning which are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

1. Communication and Language.
2. Physical Development
3. Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Providers also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas. These are:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding of the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

At Highgate Community Primary School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right and should not be viewed simply as preparation for the next stage of children's education. We believe that the EYFS framework allows a natural progression into the National Curriculum at the beginning of Year 1.

#### **4. Active Learning through Play**

At Highgate Community School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning through play.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts. At Highgate Community Primary school, we value each child's interests and aim to ensure their ideas are considered when planning the Early Years provision.

In the EYFS setting at Highgate Community Primary School practitioners provide opportunities for both structured and unstructured learning through play inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences supporting children to discover, explore and investigate, developing their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and helping to make sense of the world around them. Learning activities are planned and created to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and level of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework. This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the importance of learning through play underpins our Early Years philosophy.

#### **5. Roles and responsibilities**

The EYFS Leader is responsible for the learning and development of children in the EYFS and ensures that the curriculum is engaging and implemented in the most effective way to ensure the highest quality learning and development for all children across all aspects of the curriculum. The EYFS leader manages the deployment and organisation of staff in the EYFS to ensure consistently excellent learning and development opportunities for pupils, participates in continuing professional development (CPD), training and moderation events to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in the EYFS.

## **6. Assessment and Record Keeping**

Ongoing formative assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Highgate Community Primary School. Regular, planned and focused observations are made of children's learning and individual needs alongside spontaneous observations of daily achievements. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by retaining and filing their assessment data.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs and an electronic learning journal). All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the assessment process for children with SEND as appropriate. Staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journeys.

Learning Journeys and Busy Books record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development working from a baseline assessment within the first few weeks that the child enters school. Insight is used to record and assess ongoing progress on a regular basis and is reviewed more in depth half termly. Baseline assessment is carried out during the children's first weeks upon entering the setting. Judgments made on children's development are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

## **7. Planning**

Long term planning is discussed and topics are decided amongst the EYFS team based on the interests of the children.

Medium term planning is created with all Early Years Practitioners' involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities both indoors and outdoors. Activities are planned with regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

Educational visits within the local community and further a field are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

## **8. Parents as Partners**

At Highgate Community Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through regular informal open sessions and achievements at home for the children to share at school, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through class Dojo, electronic learning journals, regular letters including a work of the week letter, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Whole school newsletters are also sent home on a regular basis.

Parents are invited to attend parents' evenings during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the Autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the Spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents, are end of year reports and Celebration assemblies where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work and special events for Mother's and Father's Days.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have.

## **9. Admissions and Induction**

Highgate Community Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

Before they start in the setting, the EYFS leader/teacher and Nursery Nurse make a number of visits to the feeder settings providing an opportunity to talk with pre-school staff and familiarise themselves with the children. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Highgate Community Primary School as smooth as possible.

Pre-school feeder settings also have the opportunity to visit Highgate EYFS setting with their children.

Home visits are also offered to parents of all children due to start in the September. Although these visits are not compulsory they provide an invaluable opportunity to gain more knowledge and familiarity for practitioners, parents and children.

In the summer term parents are invited into school to meet the setting practitioners. At this meeting information regarding the induction process and what goes on in the setting is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. 'All About Me' induction packs will also be given out to parents as another way to support practitioners' knowledge and understanding of each individual child.

Children have a phased entry in to the Reception setting for the first two weeks of term. This aims to ensure a smooth and positive transition in to school life.

Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting. Established routines, a calm atmosphere and encouraging talk are some of the strategies practitioners use to maintain children's positive feelings about school.

*See Admissions Policy for more information.*

## **10. Equal Opportunities**

All practitioners at Highgate Community Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Highgate Community Primary School.

*See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.*

## **11. Special Educational Needs**

*See Special Educational Needs Policy.*

**Written by Mr Jenkinson, Mrs Terry & Mrs Ward; Jan 2017. Reviewed Sept 2020 by Mrs Cook.**

**To be reviewed again in Autumn Term 2022 to ensure it reflects current practice following changes to assessment procedures.**

**Adopted by the Governing Body, Sept 2020**