



St Hilda's School
HARPENDEN
Caring, Curious & Confident

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Important Note

Unless otherwise stated, all Policies of St Hilda's School apply to the school in its entirety. This comprises all staff and pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Junior School (Key Stage 1) and the Senior School (Key Stage 2).

REVIEW DATE: September 2023

REVIEWED BY: Dan Sayers (Headmaster)

SIGNED:

Dan Sayers,

DATED: 12 September 2023

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been developed in consultation with the Early Years Team, the Headmaster and Deputy Headteacher. The policy takes into account the 2004 Children Act, Every Child Matters 2003, ISI and DFES guidance. Within this document, the term Early Years is used to describe children in the Foundation Stage who are in the Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception classes, and the term setting is used to talk about the school environment.

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up'.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. The Nursery pupils attend five mornings a week.

Two afternoon sessions are compulsory for Nursery children during the Summer Term.

Pre-Nursery children may join the Nursery once they are two years old, and must attend at least two morning sessions a week during their Pre-Nursery year.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

At St Hilda's, 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, 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 and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children. All children are treated fairly regardless of gender, race, religion or abilities. 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 when planning for their learning.

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 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 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. We use our observations to include individual children's 'next steps' into weekly planning. We use the Tapestry platform to observe and record each child's progress and development from baseline through to the end of Reception. Pupil Progress Forms are completed at the end of the Autumn, Spring and Summer Terms and discussions are held between Early Years Practitioners to inform future planning. We use the Development Matters non-statutory curriculum guidance (September 2020) to support our curriculum and practice. We complete the EYFS Profile at the end of the Reception Year.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Partnerships with parents, Learning Support and external support agencies.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. Risk assessments are regularly reviewed for both the indoor and outdoor areas.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See *Safeguarding Children Policy*). The Head of Early Years is our trained DDSP.

At St Hilda's School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.

- Promote good health (including oral health), preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all staff members who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. See Safer Recruitment Policy.
- Ensure that staffing arrangements allow for adequate supervision of children to ensure their safety, including whilst eating and sleeping.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavor to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At St Hilda's School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. The following information is provided for parents *before admission*.

- The school prospectus containing information about the school and the Early Years setting. Parents are encouraged to look at the school website to gain an insight into the school ethos.
- All parents are encouraged to visit the school before putting their child's name on the waiting list.
- Each child is invited to visit the Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception class for a session to become familiar with the new environment, meet their peers and teaching staff.
- Parents are invited to attend a meeting with the Early Years staff before their child starts to discuss routines, requirements and expectations of the setting.
- Teaching staff talk to parents informally about their child before they start school.
- Parents receive a comprehensive Induction Pack and are asked to complete various forms including an "All About Me" booklet. This informs the staff of their child's likes / dislikes, fears, favourite toys, family circumstances and previous nursery experience. They are also asked to complete a separate medical form.

After admission

- The parents are asked to verify who will collect their child from school.
- Parents are invited to join FOSH – Friends of St Hilda's School.
- Parents are encouraged to share their child's 'Magic Moments' with staff and peers to add to Learning Journals.
- Nursery parents are informed of weekly topics via the Focus Sheet emailed to them by their class teacher.
- Newsletters and relevant information is shown on the school website and e-mailed to parents to keep them informed of up-to-date information from around the school and in the community.
- EYFS Noticeboard displays up to date information, i.e. menus and relevant literature.
- An 'open door' policy is held in the setting, where parents are able to chat informally at drop off and pick up times, or arrange a convenient time to discuss their child's progress, achievements and any concerns in more detail.
- Where children attend other settings in a day, we aim to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children.

- Children are allocated a **'Key Person'** within the setting. This ensures that every child's learning and care is tailored to meeting their individual needs. They seek to engage and support parents in guiding their child's development at home.
- Parents are invited to complete an annual questionnaire to share their views about the setting.
- Nursery parents are invited to attend termly Parent Consultations. Pre-Nursery parents are invited to attend Settling-In Meetings during their child's first term, the Statutory Progress Check between the age of two and three, and termly key person consultations.
- Formal reports are sent home for Nursery and Reception children at the end of the Summer Term.
- Results of each girls' EYFS Profile are sent home at the end of the Reception year and parents are invited to discuss the Profile with the Reception teacher and Head of Early Years, if they wish to. This information is also shared and discussed with Form I teaching staff and shared with the County Council on request.

Enabling Environments

At St Hilda's School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Our setting is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be both active and also quiet. The Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception classes are set up in learning areas (where space allows). Children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS has its own extensive enclosed outdoor area on the ground floor. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning. All seven areas of the curriculum are offered both indoor and outdoor.

Our aims for the outdoor environment include:

- To provide a stimulating, challenging, safe, secure environment for children to play and learn with enjoyment.
- To plan outdoor learning experiences which compliment and extend indoor provision and are stimulating and varied.
- To ensure children experience a broad balanced curriculum accessing the learning objectives and goals across the seven developmental areas.
- To ensure learning outcomes are of equal importance to those taking place indoors and are planned to extend the children's learning.
- To provide space/areas to take part in energetic, noisy, large-scale activities as well as opportunity for quieter, more reflective experiences.
- To plan for a balance between child-initiated activities and adult-led activities.
- To plan opportunities for problem solving, practising skills, conversation, investigation, exploration, inventiveness, creativity and imagination.
- To ensure health and safety at all times e.g. area is supervised, equipment is checked regularly, parents are kept informed of issues e.g. sun awareness.

Learning and Development

At St Hilda's School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

Active Learning

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.' Statutory framework for the EYFS.

At St Hilda's School we ensure active learning through:

- Making children feel at ease, secure and confident in our setting. At the beginning of the school year the pupils spend time thinking of rules to keep us safe and happy in the classroom. In Pre-Nursery and Nursery we have a positive behaviour reinforcement system where the children are rewarded 'Happy Balls' for being kind, learning new skills, persevering etc.

- Planning and offering activities that interest and motivate the children so they are keen to learn and interested in finding things out for themselves. The half-termly topics evolve from activities and questions the pupils have posed or following their fascinations at a particular time.
- Acknowledging children's achievements and successes, as well as ensuring they gain a sense of personal satisfaction from their explorations and investigations. We include open-ended investigative activities as well as using open-ended questioning. All EYFS staff challenge and extend the children's thinking.
- Enabling the pupils to have some independence and control over their learning to keep their interest and to develop their creativity. We plan adult-led directed tasks, as well as offered activities and free choice during Child-Initiated Learning (CHIL). We give children time to become absorbed in activities, allowing them to change the desired learning objective to follow their own investigations and interests.
- Planning for each individual child through personalised learning, involving parents in their child's development and learning.
- Setting individual targets from all seven areas of the curriculum using the pupils "next steps" and giving children ownership of them.
- Use of various teaching methods to ensure that all children are able to access the EYFS curriculum. Our aim is to include all three VAK (visual, auditory and kinaesthetic) learning styles into everyday teaching.

Play and Exploration

Through play children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. We give the pupils the opportunity to practice skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children are encouraged to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears in controlled and safe situations. All EYFS staff support the children's play through careful interactions when appropriate, supporting children, extending ideas and providing challenge as well as modeling play.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions." Statutory framework for the EYFS

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Teaching staff support the children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of the following areas of learning:

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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

Link to statutory framework:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Our planning covers themes and core aspects, such as physical activities, inside and outside play activities, opportunities for writing/mark making and gaining an awareness of books, exploration of the world around them. Teaching staff plan together across the Foundation Stage to ensure continuity and development for the children, taking into account the different ways children learn. They provide a series of activities that encourage children to experience all seven areas of the curriculum during the week, although all the children may not experience them on the same day. Experiences are a mixture of planned directed adult-led, and child-initiated learning to ensure a balanced curriculum.

The Foundation Stage staff monitor activities to ensure children are accessing a variety of areas and are developing their knowledge and understanding in order to reach their potential. Towards the end of the Reception year, as the children get older and more mature, tasks and activities are more focused for small groups and children are encouraged to participate for longer periods on one given task in order to prepare them for Form 1.

Daily routines in the EYFS setting

Each class follows a structured routine to allow the children to feel secure, happy and to promote independence. The daily timetable is a focus point at the beginning of the day and is referred to at different points of the day.

Routines within the Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception classes need to provide children with a balanced range of experiences, offering variety within each session, day and week. Variety will involve the following:

- Adult-led teaching, including different sized groups from whole class to small group and individual sessions.
- Child-initiated Learning.
- Active learning, i.e. active participation rather than passive learning, e.g. not sitting on the carpet for long periods of time.
- Coverage of all seven areas of learning.
- Varied seating arrangements, i.e. colour groups, friendship groups etc.
- Singing and music sessions.
- PE sessions.

The children enjoy French, Music and PE sessions throughout the week, all taught by specialist teachers. Reception are also taught Computing by a specialist teacher.

Whole school activities include the following:

- Reception joins the whole school for certain assemblies throughout the week and also attend lower school assemblies.
- Nursery children are invited to join the whole school for age-appropriate assemblies, for example Reception Sharing assembly.
- Nursery and Reception join Form I and II for Christmas celebrations, including parties, entertainers etc.
- Nursery and Reception join the whole school to celebrate World Book Day, Activity Week at the end of the Summer Term, annual Sports Day, church services etc.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS is based around half-termly themes. The themes are led by the children's conversations, interests and fascinations. Weekly plans are produced, but remain flexible to respond to the needs, achievements and interests of the children and to take account of their individual "next steps".

Regular assessments are made of children's learning starting with baseline assessments in Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception. Pre-Nursery children aged between two and three also have the Progress Check, a short summary of their development in the prime areas, shared with parents and carers. This information, coupled with the practitioner's knowledge of the child, and their professional knowledge and judgement, is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessments are shared between Early Years practitioners and the Form I teachers in an ongoing dialogue to support a successful transition to Key Stage 1.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, taken by the Early Years Practitioners. Through observation we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. Evidence includes observations on Tapestry, pupils' 'Magic Moments' from home, photographs, and examples of work completed by the child. These observations are used to inform the 'next steps' to ensure personalised learning. Regular assessments are carried out throughout the year through play-based activities, for example phonics, problem solving and reading levels, to ensure children fulfill their potential providing a firm foundation on which to build future successes. Early Years staff use the information gathered on the Tapestry platform to monitor progression and inform future planning for each child.

At the end of the Reception year the staff in Reception complete the EYFS Profile for each child, using their own knowledge and professional judgement and the ELGs, to form a judgement on the child's readiness for Form I. The Profile reports are given to Form I teachers.

Monitoring and evaluating

Please refer to the school policy on Monitoring and Evaluating for the whole school procedure.

In the Foundation Stage we regularly monitor all aspects of Early Years provision by;

- Having regular weekly staff meetings to monitor and evaluate our setting and provision within the EYFS and also join the whole school meeting on a weekly basis.
- Having regular informal staff discussions and evaluation of planning provides the opportunity to monitor the experiences children are provided with, including topics covered throughout the year.
- Holding half-termly individual supervision meetings led by the Head of EYFS.
- Attending training courses held by Hertfordshire County Council and the Leadership Team where appropriate to ensure they continually improve the quality learning and developmental experiences they offer the children.
- Setting ourselves targets, both personal through staff appraisals and supervision meetings as well as the EYFS team (as part of the SEF and School Development Plan) to ensure continual development in the Early Years. Staff are able to discuss issues and identify solutions. Supervision for each member of the team includes individual meetings between the Head of EYFS and each staff member, in order to support their role as key persons working with children and families.
- Evaluating the resources to ensure they are safe and purposeful, updating when necessary.
- Encouraging lesson observations within the EYFS team and whole school, as well as outside agencies, i.e. moderation by County for the EYFSP.
- Taking part in ISI inspections.

Resources

Staffing

Staffing levels in EYFS are compliant, or exceed, statutory guidelines.

Other adults working/visiting under the supervision of teaching staff include parent helpers, students and work experience volunteers. All staff in the Foundation Stage are responsible for sharing information regarding each child's development, including educational and emotional well-being. Staff in the Early Years have access to the following specialists: SENCO, subject specialists, qualified First Aiders (all staff,

with at least one person with Paediatric First Aid on the premises at all times). As part of the whole school, the Early Years team has access to a range of outside support agencies.

Resources and equipment

Foundation Stage resources are located in the three Early Years classrooms and outdoor sheds. Resources are shared between Pre-Nursery, Nursery and Reception for indoor and outdoor use. We also have access to whole school equipment from the individual curriculum areas such as PE equipment, music equipment, French etc. We have access to the ICT suite, hall space, Seagull Studio, swimming pool and library.

This policy will be reviewed annually, by the Senior Management Team, in line with the school's review schedule for policies.

