

Hornton Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

June 2017

Introduction and aims

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.

A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

- Working in partnership, Hornton Primary School and Peach Tree Pre-school, in a Partnership Foundation Unit, share a commitment to providing an excellent Early Years Foundation Stage experience that optimises opportunities for all children from ages two to five to reach their full potential.

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They are instinctively motivated to interact with others and explore the world around them. In their explorations, children are naturally drawn to play, driven to make new connections, consolidate ideas, learn skills and develop concepts.

- In the Foundation Unit, we aim to provide an early years education that facilitates children's natural desire to play and learn.

It is vital that early years education is valued for itself and not just seen as preparation for children's next step into learning.

- We aim to deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage in an accessible, stimulating, caring and relaxed environment where all children feel safe, valued and able to learn.

What is the Early Years Foundation stage?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, 2014) is the statutory framework that all early years' providers are legally required to have regard for. It sets out the learning and welfare requirements for children aged 0–5, and aims to ensure each unique child has the utmost opportunities in their early years setting to interact and develop relationships in a safe, caring and nurturing learning environment, enabling them to become independent and successful learners.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and Development

In the Foundation Unit, we believe each and every child is special, with their own individual strengths and experiences that make them who they are. We believe that children learn best in an environment that allows them to build and develop close relationships with consistent, caring and supportive adults.

How we deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage

The Learning and Development Requirements

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational programmes in early years settings, forming the basis for every child's learning. Three areas are considered particularly crucial for creating the firm foundations on which all other learning can be built.

Each area of learning is divided into aspects, creating seventeen aspects

Three (Prime) areas of learning:

Communication and language

1. Listening and attention
2. Understanding
3. Speaking

Physical development

4. Moving and handling
5. Health and self-care

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

6. Making relationships
7. Self-confidence and self-awareness
8. Managing feelings and behaviour

Four (Specific) areas of learning

Literacy

9. Reading
10. Writing

Mathematics

11. Numbers
12. Shape, space and measure

Understanding the world

13. People and communities
14. The world
15. Technology

Expressive arts and design

16. Exploring and using media and materials
17. Being imaginative
18. The EYFS places great emphasis on children learning through play, both inside and outside, supported by caring and knowledgeable professionals who are able to plan playful activities that stimulate, challenge and progress learning.

In the Foundation Unit, Teachers and Key Persons plan activities and experiences for groups and individuals that take into account stages of development, children's interests and learning styles, to stimulate, challenge and progress each and every child in the 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning.

We believe that by providing an environment, supported by a team knowledgeable and caring professionals, that encourages children to explore, investigate and problem solve, make their own choices and decisions, practice their skills, test their theories and build on what they already know, children are truly motivated to learn, create and be creative.

The children in the Foundation Unit have access to our outside learning environment throughout the day, regardless of the weather, promoting the development of the skills needed for balance, co-ordination, speed management and safety, all suggested as fundamental to shaping children's thought processes and future learning capabilities.

In line with current Early Years thinking, we believe having the space and opportunity to practice large physical movements is crucial for children to develop of the fine motor skills needed for writing.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

To enable a child to become an effective learner, the Early Years Foundation Stage identifies three inter-changeable characteristics which help children to become competent and lifelong learners. These characteristics form the basis of how we support children's attitudes towards learning.

The three characteristics are:

Playing and Exploring - engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active Learning - motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and Thinking Critically

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

At Hornton Primary School and Peach Tree Pre-school, we advocate an approach that recognises children develop at their own rate, and in their own way. We believe, through play, children learn many skills and concepts, enabling them to begin to make sense of the world around them. Through our carefully planned play environment, children are able to make choices and decisions and use all their senses to explore, investigate and problem solve.

In an environment that respects and values the thoughts, ideas and input of every child, children feel confident to take risks in their learning and try new things. Through being positively encouraged to follow their own thoughts and ideas, children are truly motivated to learn, create and be creative, developing the skills and characteristics needed to become lifelong effective learners.

Assessment

The EYFS places emphasis on the importance of assessment in helping teachers, key persons and parents to recognise children's progress and understand their needs, in order to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. This approach is strengthened in the EYFS by a progress check at age two and the completion of the EYFS profile at the end of the EYFS (in the summer term of the reception year in school).

We closely monitor children's learning and development to ensure the learning opportunities within the unit are stimulating, relevant, challenging and fun. Our system of monitoring allows for the early identification of any issues that might impact on children's development, so that strategies can be put in place early to optimise children's opportunities to reach their full potential. We recognise that children develop at their own rates, and in their own way. The non-statutory development matters guidance development bands are used in the unit as a basis to indicate progress.

Partnership with parents

At Hornton Primary School and Peach Tree Pre-school, we are committed to working closely with parents to ensure that every child's learning opportunities are optimised both in the setting and at home. Teachers and key persons in the unit work closely with parents to share learning aspirations. To support this approach, we operate an online information sharing system.

The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The EYFS places a legal requirement on all early years providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well.

Child protection

- We are committed to:
 - building a 'culture of safety' in which children are protected from abuse and harm in all areas of our service delivery. Our way of working with children and their parents ensures that we are aware of any problems that may emerge and can offer support, including referral to appropriate agencies when necessary.
 - responding promptly and appropriately to all incidents or concerns of abuse that may occur and to work with statutory agencies in accordance with the procedures that are set down in 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (HMG 2006).
 - working within the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board guidelines.
 - ensuring all staff have an understanding of safeguarding issues and their responsibilities through our induction, training and learning programmes.
 - empowering young children and promoting their right to be strong, resilient and listened to through our early childhood curriculum and our teaching and learning practices.

Suitable people

- We ensure all adults, working or volunteering in the unit have received enhanced DBS clearance and have the suitable qualifications and attributes for working with young children.
- We ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities.
- We have an effective staff supervision programme that fosters a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Managing behaviour

- We believe that children flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are understood, supported and met and where there are clear, fair and developmentally appropriate expectations for their behaviour.
- We have clear expectations and boundaries for behaviour and encourage children to develop an understanding for this through reflection, guidance and modelling appropriate behaviour.
- Children are encouraged to consider the views and feelings, and needs and rights, of others and the impact that their behaviour has on people, places and objects.

Special Educational Needs

- We provide an environment in which all children with special educational needs (SEN) are supported to reach their full potential.
- We have regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2014).
- We ensure our provision is inclusive to all children with special educational needs and their families.
- We identify the specific needs of children with special educational needs at the earliest opportunity and meet those needs through a range of SEN strategies.
- We work in partnership with parents and other agencies in meeting individual children's needs.
- We monitor and review our policy, practice and provision and, if necessary, make adjustments.

Inclusion

- We ensure that our service is fully inclusive in meeting the needs of all children. We recognise that children and their families come from diverse backgrounds and that all families have needs and values that arise from their individual, social, economic, ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds and situations.

Transition

- We recognise that transition into and from Reception is an important and potentially vulnerable period for children. Systems such as home visits, visit sessions and talk-time aim to ensure that transitions into and out of the early years remain as smooth as possible. The sharing of assessment information between practitioners means that children's needs are met and their learning is well pitched right from the start of reception and year one.

Approval and review

This policy was approved by the Full Governing Body on the 15th June 2017.

Review due; June 2019