



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Changes in this version	Updated to refer to Schoolworks Intimate Care Policy

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching, learning and the care of our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children.

Aims

To provide an environment that is caring, nurturing, stimulating and one that fosters children's independence and develops their collaborative skills.

To encourage each child to reach their full potential and experience success.

To provide a play-based curriculum where children can learn through first-hand experiences.

We will provide this by:

Providing a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging play-based curriculum in which children will gain confidence in their abilities and feel successful.

Encouraging children to try new things and therefore to explore and investigate the world around them.

Providing a comprehensive range of resources to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are experienced and explored by all children, including those with additional needs and regardless of age, race or ability.

Providing a key person system to ensure children and parents have a special person with whom to liaise and therefore form attachments. In Reception, every child has a named key person, usually the class teacher, who is supported by the teaching assistant and wider EYFS team.

Developing children's self-help and communication skills, this will give children independence and enable them to express their emotions.

Helping children develop emotional stability, ensuring that they have a strong sense of belonging.

Developing an ongoing understanding of children's interests, strengths and development through quality interactions, observations and assessment.

Promoting children's communication and language skills through high quality interactions, storytelling, songs, rhymes and vocabulary development.

Supporting children to develop self-regulation, resilience and emotional wellbeing through nurturing relationships and consistent routines.

Learning and Developing

Our curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage reflects the principles and requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (effective from September 2025) and any subsequent updates. There are 7 areas of learning and development that shape educational provision in all Early Years settings. All areas of learning are important and inter-connected. Our children's learning experience enables them to develop competency across the 7 areas. This requires a balance of adult led and child-initiated

activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of the Reception year.

A unique child Every child is a unique child who 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 environments Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

Learning and development Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Practitioners teach children by ensuring there are challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

There are 3 prime areas:

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

There are 4 specific areas through which the 3 prime areas are strengthened and applied:

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

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The nursery and reception teachers plan activities within the nursery and reception indoor and outdoor environments with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

The Learning Environment:

Children have access to both the inside and the outside learning environments. The 7 areas of learning are planned for through our continuous provision. Children learn through first-hand experiences and a play-based curriculum.

Planning:

Planning incorporates an appropriate balance between adult and child-initiated activities and takes into account children's interests. In both Nursery and Reception, planning is based around a half termly overarching theme whilst still adapting the learning where necessary to

reflect children's interests and curious minds. In both Nursery and Reception children's learning experiences are enhanced through parent partnership, religious festivals, theme related visitors and educational trips.

Assessment:

When a child starts in Nursery, an initial assessment is carried out taking information shared by parents and observations in the first few days of Nursery. If there are concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners will develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving other professionals as appropriate.

A child who joins Nursery prior to their 3rd birthday will undergo the statutory 2-year progress check which is carried out by the nursery practitioner and is shared with parents.

On entering reception, each child will be assessed in their first half term at school. Through observations, information from parents and information from nursery settings, staff will assess their attainment in the seven areas of learning. In Reception we use the DFE baseline assessment as well as teacher baseline assessments, which is shared with parents at the Autumn next step meeting. Children identified with a low baseline are discussed with the school SENDCO to plan for their needs.

Ongoing assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. Assessment is based on practitioners' ongoing professional knowledge of children, informed by high-quality interactions, observations and discussions with parents. Evidence is gathered purposefully and assessment information is used to inform teaching and support children's next steps. The EYFS Profile will be completed at the end of the reception year; data will be sent to county and practitioners will report whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). Children who do not achieve all of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year continue to work towards them in Year 1. These end of year profile assessments are reported to parents in the end of year report.

In Nursery, a summary of the child's interests and learning styles is shared with parents in the Summer term before starting Reception. Nursery have a transition meeting with the EYFS Leader and Reception teachers have a transition meeting with Year 1 teachers to aid a smooth transition into key Stage 1. During the last few weeks of the Summer Term, children will have transitional opportunities to explore their new environment and see their new teacher. All attainment data is passed to the Year1 teacher for continuity at this time of transition.

Key person:

The key person approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners. At nursery the key person communicates regularly with parents to discuss their child's progress and how they can work together to move forward with learning. The key person also has a supporting role with the child's family.

In Reception, the class teacher is usually the child's named key person and works closely with the teaching assistant and wider EYFS team to meet children's individual needs. Their role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. The key person acts as a first point of contact with parents.

Safeguarding and Welfare:

At Hawthorns Primary School and Nursery, we comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements outlined in the current Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Keeping Children Safe in Education. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and the welfare of children is paramount.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promote good health.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner that is appropriate for the child's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose for which it was intended.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- All staff receive regular safeguarding training.
- Staff understand procedures for reporting concerns.
- Online safety is taught in age-appropriate ways.
- Mobile phone, camera and use of technology procedures are followed in line with school Staff Handbook
- Staff understand their responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.

It is important that all children in school are safe. We aim to educate children to recognise and avoid hazards and learn how to manage their own safety within firm boundaries and guidelines.

Intimate Care:

Intimate care is any care that involves washing, supporting children to manage their personal hygiene for example during dressing, toileting, wiping bottoms or changing soiled clothing after an accident. We actively encourage parents to start helping their children to become independent with these tasks before starting nursery or school (more information in the Schoolworks Academy Trust Intimate Care Policy).

We promote good oral health through age-appropriate learning opportunities, healthy eating practices and partnership working with parents. We support the NHS Supervised toothbrushing Scheme in reception when the children are ready to participate.

Sleep and Rest

Children who require sleep or rest during the day are supported in accordance with the school's Safe Sleep Guidance. Staff follow current guidance to ensure sleep arrangements are safe, regularly monitored and meet individual children's needs.

Inclusion:

We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where every child is valued and supported to achieve their full potential. Provision is adapted to meet the needs of children with SEND, children learning English as an Additional Language (EAL), disadvantaged children and those who may require additional support. Practitioners work closely with parents, the SENDCO and external professionals to ensure children receive appropriate support and reasonable adjustments where required.

Enhanced transition arrangements are implemented for children requiring additional support, including those with SEND, medical needs or vulnerabilities. These arrangements may include additional visits, transition books, visual supports, meetings with parents and liaison with external agencies.

Links with Pre-School providers:

During the Summer term the EYFS lead makes contact with pre-school providers and organises a visit. These links are important for children's smooth transition into school. During the summer term, nursery children have regular transition visits with their Reception class teacher and time to familiarise themselves with the Reception classroom environment. Nursery staff contact other nurseries or childminder providers if the child attends more than one setting or a child is transferring to Nursery to gain a full understanding of the child.

Partnership with Parents:

We recognise that parent/carers are a child's first educators. We keep them informed about their child's learning and development and what they can do to support their child on their learning journey. In Reception and Nursery parents are invited to a 'next step' meeting in the Autumn and Spring term to discuss their child's progress and next steps in learning. This is also an opportunity for parents to share learning that they have observed in the home environment.

A parent information evening is held in May/June for parents of the incoming Reception group. The purpose of this meeting is in part, to disseminate important information, to encourage discussion and to emphasize the vital importance of home and school working together to support children in their learning journey.

Class Dojo is used in both Nursery and Reception as an effective form of communication with parents. The message function allows parents and key workers or teachers to communicate regularly with each other and the class stories function is used to share a 'snapshot' of learning that has been taking place in the setting each week.

Before starting Hawthorns, the parents in Nursery and Reception classes are offered a home visit as a starting point to foster a positive home/school partnership.

Induction and entry to Hawthorns:

Children who start in the nursery are offered settling in sessions according to the need of the child. This is carefully planned in collaboration with parents to ensure a smooth transition.

During the summer term, pre-school children attending Nursery have regular transition visits to the Reception class to meet their teacher and play in the classroom environment. All children are then invited in during the Summer term for their induction 'play sessions.' During these sessions the children meet the adults who will care for them when they start school. The parents are invited to stay for some of the sessions and are introduced to the school community such as the EYFS team, Head of School and SENDCO.

New potential Reception parents are invited to an 'Open Day' where parents have the opportunity to meet the Head of School and have a tour of the school. Parents of new Reception children are invited to a meeting in May/June. This is the first opportunity to discuss children's play sessions, parent welcome meetings; uniform etc.