

Holmer Lake Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



2020-2021

” Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2014.’

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

At Holmer Lake Primary School 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 celebrating success, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

The EYFS is based upon three characteristics of effective learning:

1. Playing and exploring – engagement

This involves the children: Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to ‘have a go.’

2. Active learning – motivation

This involves the children: Being involved and concentrating, keeping trying and enjoying achieving what they set out to do.

3. Creating and thinking critically – thinking

This involves the children: Having their own ideas, making links and choosing ways to do things.

These characteristics of effective learning are developed and achieved through three prime areas of learning and four specific areas of learning. These are categorised as follows:

Three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

Additionally there are **four specific areas of learning:**

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

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's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

The Learning Environment

At Holmer Lake Primary School the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by adult observation of the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom both inside and out is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources. We encourage the children to become independent in choosing and using their own equipment and resources for play and in developing their own learning. The children have access to outdoor learning throughout the day. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources are provided for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

Teaching and Learning Style

The school's teaching and learning policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Play

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

We plan for a range of play opportunities for our children including:

- Child initiated – where children plan, carry out and evaluate their play.
- Adult directed – where an adult describes what a child is expected to do to ensure focused learning in a particular area.
- Child led – where children chose from a group of activities but develop the play themselves.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

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.”

Children are given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults support 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.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS follows the government document ‘Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage’.

These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning. Some of the weekly planning is based on the ideas and the assessed needs of the children, building on their achievements and interests.

Regular assessments of children’s learning are made; this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children’s learning journey books.

We use a profile tracker to record a child’s development across the EYFS, identifying what ‘age and stage’ bracket they are working within. We can then surmise whether they are emerging into, working at or exceeding their expected age. This is updated termly and discussed in pupil progress meetings with senior. In the final term of the EYFS, a written summary is given to parents, reporting their child’s progress. Data is analysed to look for patterns and trends. This information informs the School Development Plan. Information is also shared with the children’s Year 1 teachers to help ensure a smooth transition into the National Curriculum.

Baseline assessment

Our approach to baseline assessment ensures that we get an accurate picture of each child. On entry to the EYFS, children are assessed against the development matters statements through a variety of observations and adult directed activities. Information is also gathered from previous provisions and settings. Entry data is entered onto O track

Parents as Partners

Parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children.

The partnership is achieved by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts school and nursery. Parents invited to complete a questionnaire about their child's needs and current development.
- Inviting children to spend time with their teacher prior to starting school during our "Induction Sessions."
- Parents are invited to attend an EYFS induction where the Head Teacher and Foundation stage teacher explain the curriculum.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher about any concerns they may have.
- Shortly after starting school parents of children in Reception are invited to discuss progress in private with the teacher and review their child's work.
- Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the academic year
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents. For example, fund raising days, themed activity days, nativity, sports day, to which all family members are invited.
- Home/school communication books are used to provide a link between home and the setting. Ideas on how parents can help their child at home are shared in the book.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the class teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children within the EYFS, and is supported by Teaching Assistants.

We have good links with feeder nurseries and other provisions. The EYFS teacher meets with staff to discuss the new intake of children prior to them starting school. These visits provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs and to meet the children within the pre-school environment.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly, regardless of 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 provide every child the 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 but challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. This is achieved by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, 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;
- 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.

It is important to us that all children in school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children within boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We offer children 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.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

“Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.”

At Holmer Lake Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good 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 adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- 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 meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

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.

The SMART code

In Reception there is a clear emphasis on developing children’s understanding of the whole school SMART code.

Children following the SMART code are celebrated through assemblies, star of the week and winning the Smart Cup.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and phase leader will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Review Date – July 2021