



Early Years Policy

Date Adopted:	November 2021
Next Review Date:	October 2024
Signature of Chair of Governors:	
Signature of Headteacher:	

Mission statement

“A learning community – developing hearts and minds”

We believe in the potential of every child so all the children are given the opportunity to develop the capacity to surprise themselves and those around them. They are taught to challenge themselves to build confidence and resilience.

“When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.” (‘Development Matters.’ DFE July 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In our school all children join us on a phased introduction at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- 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/or carers;
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

A Unique Child

At Hollingbourne Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at Hollingbourne School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children’s range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs & Disability policy.

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and 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 through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

It is vital that all children in the school are safe. We educate the children about boundaries and rules and help them to understand why we need to stay safe, and what we can do to keep ourselves safe. 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 both in the real and virtual world.

Positive Relationships

At Hollingbourne Primary School we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children.

We do this by:

- a carefully planned transition into school which is tailored depending on cohort, this tends to include individual classroom visits, parent meetings, discussions with preschool, home visits, preschool visits.
- offering meetings to parents when necessary such curriculum meetings and phonics workshops.
- encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings in Dec and March/April to discuss their child's progress.
- providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each long term.
- using a contact book for parents to pass on messages at their convenience and vice versa.
- providing opportunities for parents to look through their learning journals.
- providing parents with home learning challenges, where parents and children make comments which goes directly into their learning journals.
- weekly updates provided with home learning, providing an overview of the week.
- reading books sent home weekly with a reading record providing parents the opportunity to read comments made by the teachers and share their experiences at home.

Enabling Environments

At Hollingbourne Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We recognise that the outside environment is just as important as the inside and we work hard to ensure both provide a wide range of opportunities for the children to learn. We provide a range of resources inside and outside, particularly those that are open ending and holistic allowing the children to use them in a range of different ways and for different purposes. We ensure the environment reflects the children's current interests by providing provocations into the environment which allow for subtle changes to keep the children engaged and motivated whilst still providing the children with the freedom of choice. The environment is carefully set up in a way to ensure maximum

independence to provide the children with self confidence and to learn without restrictions or barriers. We ensure the resources are accessible and clear, everything the children need is on offer and this is constantly be reviewed and reflected upon by the Early Years Team.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning tends to be based upon a termly theme that we try to keep to where possible, however we ensure these themes are large enough to follow the lead of the children. The weekly planning is based around an exciting book to hook the children in, from this we plan out adult led sessions and then add provocations into the environment. Planning tends to follow a practical nature where ever possible, using real life resources that the children can manipulate.

Our practice is based upon the process of observe, assess, plan. We follow a very in the moment approach and ensure the staff are utilizing all learning moments and ensuring they are present in the children's play extended and moving the children on as and when the opportunities arise. We value the importance of discussion as well as questioning however we also recognise how valuable it can be by standing back and observing the children uninterrupted. Observations may be collected in a variety of ways, from collecting work from lessons, children independent work, pictures and pieces of writing, quotes and photos, these are gathered by all members of staff but is also encouraged from other adults who may observe these children going around the school.

Observation is the main way we assess the children, teachers responding to the children and their learning moments instantly but using this to then inform future interactions. We do also issue the Baseline test as required by the Government within Term 1. After that we do regularly assess the children via phonics assessments.

Learning and Development

At Hollingbourne Primary School 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 interconnected. We plan our day to maximise the opportunity to play, the longer the children are able to play, the more time and freedom they have to become deeply involved in their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

PRIME AREAS

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

SPECIFIC AREAS

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

These areas are taught through a mix of adult led lesson and child-initiated play. Opportunities to cover the curriculum are created throughout all aspects of the school day, from free flow snack bar, to lining up times.

We have an outside area which is constantly available to all children, this helps to provide the children with a range of different ways to experience the curriculum. We make sure that what is on offer outside is different to what is inside, so learning can happen on a larger and messier scale.

Children are taught to read and write through the daily teaching of Phonics, with plenty of opportunities to apply these skills within the environment, other lessons and through plenty of reading opportunities at school and at home.

Play

We value play and understand it holds ample of learning opportunity. We understand that play allows children to inquisitive, creative and experimental all while they ask questions and feel safe. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning 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.

Routines

The children come in to school between 8.45-8.55 where the children can come in and get on with morning work until register time. We then teach predominantly 4 adult led carpet sessions throughout the day which is phonics, Maths, literacy and reading. When the children are not engaged in adult led carpet sessions they are engaging in continuous provision. The children have free access to milk, unlimited access to fruit and they have the opportunity to independently serve themselves something from the snack bar, this may be cereal or a hot snack such as toast. The children slowly begin to attend assemblies, starting with celebration assembly, then signing assembly and we slowly increase these as we reach Term 6, we make sure that we got at a pace suitable for the current cohort. The children have lunch time between 12-13.00 where they will go out on the field with the rest of the school.

Taking risks

Children are encouraged to take risks and challenge themselves. This is encouraged by staff; however, children's safety is paramount and the early years environment is carefully risk assessed. We encourage the children to risk assess their own activities well and model and guide them checking that something is safe before proceeding.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teacher to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the practitioners and to the whole governing body.

Senior Leadership will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Signed

Amy Ischt-Berger

Amy Ischt-Berger
October 2021