



**Hatherley**  
INFANT SCHOOL & NURSERY

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure that at Hatherley Infants children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with the highest quality of care and education by:

- Accessing a broad and balanced curriculum them the wide range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school life.
- Ensure quality in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and feels unique.
- Developing a close working partnership with parents/carers and practitioners that makes sure that a child's needs are met and they reach their full potential.
- Ensuring every child is recognised as being unique and valued. They are supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practise. Providing early intervention and family support to those children who require it.
- Creating a safe, happy and learning rich environment which is motivating and allows children to have enjoyable learning experiences.

## 2. Legislation

This policy is This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

*As outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2021) '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.'*

The following whole school policy documents support and should be read in conjunction with the following school policies: Curriculum Policy; Admissions Policy, Health and Safety Policy, SEND Policy, Inclusion policy, & Behaviour Policy.

We adhere to the EYFS Statutory Framework (2021) and the four overarching principles that shape practice within Early Years settings. These are:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
4. Importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years' provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

### **3. Structure of EYFS**

Our Early Years Foundation Stage commences in our Nursery and continues into reception (Foxcubs). We are a 2 form entry primary school but currently only have 1 reception class.

Hatherley Nursery offers sessional childcare for 2, 3 & 4 year olds. There are 2 sessions per day, plus a lunchtime which afternoon children may attend or others can continue for a full day.

Parents are able to claim both universal and extended funding. Sessions are available for all. Nursery sessions cost £15; if a child wants to claim a school dinner they are asked to pay £2.30.

### **4. Curriculum**

Working in partnership with parents and/or carers we promote the learning and development of all children in our care, and ensure they are ready for year 1.

We guide the children's development over 7 areas of learning (Statutory framework 2021).

These 7 areas of learning and development shape the educational programme in our early years' setting. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas, are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity, enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and thriving. They reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop, learn effectively and become ready for school.

The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through into reception in the Early Years at Hatherley and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. It is recognised that this is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary and there should be a greater focus on teaching the essential skills and knowledge in the specific areas of learning. This will help children to prepare for year 1.

Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

**The prime areas are:**

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

**The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:**

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

The full detail of these Educational Programmes are set out in the Statutory Framework (2021) pages 8 – 10. Early Learning Goals for the end of the EYFS are set out in the Statutory Framework (2021) pages 11 – 15.

## **As part of our practice we:**

Use Development Matters (September 2020) non-statutory curriculum guidance for the new EYFS framework from September 2021 to guide our Educational Programme. We also have regard for the Birth to 5 Matters document as a rich source of Early Years, evidence-based theory to ensure we consider every child as a unique child, to support the development of positive relationships and provide enabling environments to support the teaching and learning requirements that will allow children to progress towards Early Learning Goals in a developmentally appropriate way.

Consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in our care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development, based on observation and assessment.

Ensure children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful experiences where they can explore, think creatively and are active in their learning. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning.

Provide a balanced curriculum across the seven areas of learning.

Plan exciting and challenging learning experiences.

Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are both adult-initiated and child-initiated where play is the predominant vehicle for learning.

Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.

Operate a free-flow environment encouraging independence and decision-making skills

Focus on the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning

- Playing and exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and thinking critically

## Planning

**In Nursery:** Staff follow a blended approach to planning and observing; for the majority of the session children are able to engage in child led play. During this time staff plan largely 'in the moment'. In the moment planning allows planning to be spontaneous and teaching to be 'in the moment', rather than 'planned for' in advance. This approach is based on research which proves that children learn best when they have initiated the play. Staff have a sound understanding of the educational programmes within the Early Years Foundation Stage which ensures that children's play is enhanced appropriately and all areas of the curriculum are covered.

Nursery staff meet weekly to reflect and evaluate children's learning. Staff discuss children's current interests; children who are in need of additional support; plan adult directed activities and make changes to the learning environment.

**In Reception:** Staff plan activities and experiences for children that provide opportunities to develop and learn across the 7 areas of learning and development.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Staff write medium term theme plans which, over the year, offer experiences in all seven areas. These plans are reviewed by the Senior Leadership team. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations. We remain flexible for unplanned circumstances or to allow us to follow the children's interests. Staff write weekly phonics, literacy and maths plans.

## Teaching

The Statutory Framework (2021) does not prescribe a particular teaching approach. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.

**In Nursery:** for the majority of the session children engage in child-initiated play with access to both the inside and outside environments. During the session, adults are readily available to facilitate, scaffold and extend children's play. Adults are equally encouraged to observe, watch, listen and review children's play and interactions; understanding where to interject and when to allow children to continue to play independently.

During the session children are encouraged to engage in adult directed time such as registration and 'wake and shake'; singing time; snack time and story time. As the year progresses more adult directed activities and small group times are introduced; namely focussing on children's phonological development.

The routine remains flexible to meet the needs of the children, it is designed to encourage children to socialise and develop social skills through sharing, turn taking and practicing positive behaviour. Children also learn the importance of taking responsibility; making choices and developing independence throughout the session.

**In Reception:** children have whole class, small group and 1 to 1 teaching times. A daily phonics session, taught aspects of Mathematics and Literacy and topic / theme activities are timetabled over the week.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults.

During children's play, early years' practitioners interact to stretch learning and challenge children further and it is here that practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out. Within our daily routine, children learn the importance of taking responsibility; making choices and developing their independence.

## **5. Assessment**

At Hatherley Infant School and Nursery we recognise that assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge.

When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement.

Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any area gives cause for concern this is discussed with the child's parents and/or carers and we agree how to support the child. If it is considered that a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support we refer and access relevant services from other agencies as appropriate and reflect these needs in our provision to support the child as necessary.

### **In Nursery:**

Staff know the children well and spend quality, uninterrupted time with them throughout the session. Through continuous engagement and interaction with the children, staff make on-going, formative assessment throughout the session. These observations and assessments are most often held in the mind of the practitioner to inform and implement immediate next steps. They may however, be documented in the child's learning journey.

Every child has an individual learning journey which documents any written observations and assessments as well as children's work.

The Nursery Facebook page serves as a 'whole class' learning journey and documents what and how the children have been learning.

In the Summer term, transition reports are written for each child which documents children's progression throughout the year and discusses their learning and development in more detail. The transition report reflects practitioner knowledge and professional judgement and includes any ongoing observations and discussions with parents

and/or carers. Transition reports are shared with parents and then shared with the child's reception class teacher.

All nursery staff attend a handover meeting with the Hatherley reception class teachers where the transition report information informs a dialogue between practitioners and reception teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to school. Some children attend multiple settings throughout the year. For those children, contact is made periodically with their other setting/s in order to complete a fair and accurate assessment.

**In Reception:** we undertake a Statutory Assessment at the start of the reception year – the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts Reception.

We form a baseline assessment of the children on entry to Reception – comprising of a 1:1 Phonological awareness and Phonic check, a maths assessment, a writing / mark making baseline. Through observation and play create a base line of children's Communication and Language skills, Physical Development and Personal and Social skills.

We use Insight to identify children who are on track or not on track in the 3 Prime areas and Reading, Writing and Maths as follows:

Baseline by October half term and then at the following intervals:

- End of term 2 (Christmas)
- End of term 3 (Feb half term)
- End of term 4 (Easter)
- End of term 5 (May half term)
- End of term 6 (Summer term)

In addition, Understanding the World, Physical Development and Expressive Art and Design will be assessed 3 x per Year: December, Easter and at the end of the Summer term.

Each child has a learning journey which contains learning and experiences throughout the year along side a writing, maths and phonics book.

We carry out 1:1 phonics assessments as set out in the Phonics Progression document.

We carry out 1:1 maths assessments Baseline, December and Easter.

We read 1:1 with children weekly to monitor their reading and phonic progress.

In the Autumn and Spring term, parents are invited to attend a parents evening where progress, successes and any learning and development needs are addressed.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects practitioner knowledge and professional judgement and includes any ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. Moderation across the classes occurs throughout the year and with Year One at the end of the year to ensure the accuracy of the judgments. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

The EYFS Profile results are provided to the local authority.

Reception teachers attend a handover meeting with Year 1 where assessment information informs a dialogue between practitioners and year 1 teachers about each child's learning and development, to support a successful transition to key stage 1.

## **6. Working with Parents**

**In Nursery** every child is assigned a key person. Key people develop and sustain a sound relationship with their key children and their families; they are responsible for monitoring their children's learning and development throughout the year and sharing with parents periodically.

Our partnerships with parents begins before the child starts at nursery. The nursery manager will communicate an offer along with a detailed welcome pack to inform the parents about the nursery including our ethos, how we plan and assess and other useful information such as

what to bring, session times and prices. Prior to their start date, children are offered a home visit, stay and play session and settling sessions to support their transition to nursery; all of which help to develop a strong relationship between children, parents and staff.

There are various ways in which information is shared between parents and nursery including the newsletters, parent noticeboards, formal meetings, informal daily discussions and learning journeys.

Parents receive a transition record at the end of the year, these are followed up with a parent meeting which allows the child's learning, development, progress and next steps to be discussed further. The key person will offer suggestions for further development and recommend referrals to more specialist services, if needed.

**In Reception** our partnership with parents begin before the child starts school with parent meetings, stay and play transition sessions and a staggered transition into school.

The school sends out an offer letter along with a detailed welcome pack to inform the parents about the school. Prior to their start date we hold a Welcome session for Parents and children are offered a visit in the classrooms with the Teacher to support their transition to school, all of which helps to develop a strong relationship between children, parents and staff.

There are various ways in which information is shared between parents and school including class pages on the school website, newsletter, formal and informal meetings and achievement awards. We offer sessions to parents to come into the classrooms to share learning, engage in activities to support their children and opportunities to attend coffee mornings and activity sessions.

We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education.

In Reception the Class Teachers are the Key Persons for the children and in collaboration with supportive Teaching Assistants are able to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their needs.

## **7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures**

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our whole school Safeguarding Policy.

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Please see our separate Whole School policies and procedures which support this EYFS Policy.

## **8. Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals at Hatherley, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan an Educational Programme that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that our children have opportunity to achieve the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

**In Nursery and Reception:** The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator is Jo Johnson.

We offer a total communication approach within the nursery, supporting all children through the use of objects of reference, visuals, a visual timetable. Staff receive general and specific training to meet the individual needs of children and share this information with parents. The environment is regularly reviewed to reflect the holistic needs of all of the children and to ensure that each child is able to access the provision provided.

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels of development, or their progress causes concern, practitioners gather information about the child from assessments, checks and observations. The

SENCO follows the 'Graduated Pathway' to put plans in place to support these children. A child may be placed on a My Plan or My Plan+, which are used to plan, monitor and evaluate children's progress. Team around the Child (TAC) meetings are used to review the child's progress in partnership with parents. During the TAC, if all professionals involved agree that the child is making good progress, the My Plan/+ can end.

However, if it is felt that further support is needed to support more specific areas of a child's development, for example speech and language or sensory difficulties, the SENCO can make referrals and will work closely with both professionals and parents to provide the best support possible to the child.

In cases where a child is making little /no progress, a 'Request for Statutory Assessment' can be written and sent off with supporting evidence to determine the need for an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) needs assessment.

## 9. Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition stage we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

**In Nursery:** it is our aim that every child attending Hatherley Nursery is made to feel welcome and secure. Children attend a stay and play session and are welcomed to two settling sessions before starting at nursery, this develops familiarity with the practitioners and the setting. Parents receive a detailed welcome pack before their child starts at Nursery and every child completes a 'My Profile' sheet which is shared with all staff in nursery.

Phone calls to children's previous settings are carried out. Regular contact is made and summative assessments are shared with other settings should children attend a second setting e.g. childminder, day nursery.

In nursery transition documents are completed detailing individual children's development with regards to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The transition document is shared with parents. The transition

document is passed onto the Reception teachers and a detailed discussion takes place regarding all children moving up to Reception which results in a straightforward transition for all. If a child is leaving and starting school elsewhere we ensure that all paperwork is forwarded to the relevant teachers.

**In Reception:** transition visits are planned for the Summer term where the children can begin to become familiar with the Class Teachers and environment. There is a stay and play session. The children are then invited to a morning session followed by a school lunch (optional). 1:1 visits are offered at the beginning of term in the classrooms.

When children commence school the Summer Born, Spring Born and Autumn Born have staggered start dates which are split between mornings and afternoons.

A Welcome Parents' meeting is held in the Summer Term and a Welcome and introduction to phonics session in the Autumn Term.

In the final term in Hatherley, the Reception children will take part in planned shuffle up sessions and the Year 1 teachers will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board. The policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.