

Early Years Policy for **Hugh Joicey C of E Aided First School** **May 2015**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

EYFS is a curriculum for children from birth to 5 years. There are four guiding 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 and
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

We are a small, caring community school. We provide a safe, secure, stimulating environment in which children develop and learn socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

Early years at Hugh Joicey C of E Aided First School is currently a pure Reception class (Oak Class) and educates children whose fifth birthday falls within that academic year. All children attend full time from the beginning of the Autumn term in September.

There is 1 Reception teachers and 1 part-time classroom assistants. The teachers are the Key Workers responsible for the child's pastoral care. We work closely with other providers in the area, especially the on-site pre-school.

Our ethos and pedagogy

We are a Church of England First school with close links to our local church and community. We make the most of our extensive rural school grounds focusing on active and outdoor learning and have regular sessions in our forest school. We set up our environment for play and enquiry based learning opportunities, building on the children's interests and individual stages of development. Objective-led planning ensures that, through a balance of child initiated and adult-directed activities, each child progresses to achieve their full potential. We recognise that all children have different learning styles and fascinations and we respond to these to engage them to become active, independent, resilient and inquisitive learners. We organise off-site visits, visitors and celebrations to stimulate and enhance our children's learning and experiences.

The EYFS curriculum

Reception class children follow the good practice described in 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage'

Characteristics of effective Learning

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and respond to these in our practice. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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 achieving.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

These characteristics are the foundations for lifelong learning.

There are 7 areas of learning, all crucial and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The 3 Prime Areas are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal and Social Development

We support children in the four specific areas through which the prime areas are reinforced and applied.

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

Communication and language development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

In addition children have weekly swimming lessons at Glendale Middle School and visit the Forest school with an accredited Forest School Leader and classroom assistant. (See Forest School Leaflet)

The setting and routines

The teaching day starts at 9.00 am and finishes at 3.15 pm.

We have a daily whole-school Assembly.

Lunch is 12 till 1 pm, meals are free for children up to the end of Year 2. Free fruit is provided at snack time at 10.15 am. Free milk is provided until the term of child's 5th birthday.

Morning playtime is on the yard or field with children from Cherry and Beech classes.

Many children travel by minibus and taxi or can be collected from the front door at 3.15 pm. (Restrictions applied by School Transport, NCC).

Transitions

We recognise what a big change it is for children leaving familiar pre-school settings and home, and starting full-time Reception. We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible through the following:

- Teachers visit new starters in pre-school
- Most children take lunch in school hall with main school, opportunity to learn names and talk to teachers
- 4 x 2 hour visits Pre-school visits to Oak class in Summer term.
- Transition meeting with pre-school leader (Carol Douglas) and team
- New Starters meeting for Parents
- Information pack provided, including 'About Me' booklet for parents and children to return to school.
- Open-door policy
- Parent consultations in first half term.

At the end of Reception Year we facilitate transition to Year 1 by working closely with KS1 teacher, sharing all final assessments and characteristics of learning. There is an opportunity to visit and the KS1 teacher visits Oak class.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Teachers, classroom assistants and the Forest School Leader regularly observe the children in their activities. Observations are used to assess individual needs and to inform future planning for next steps of learning. Baseline assessment is undertaken at the beginning of the academic year and cross referenced with transition information from previous providers.

Children with additional needs are assessed in more depth following our Inclusion Policy.

Children's progress is tracked through the Development Matters bands as emerging, developing or secure throughout the year. Data is finally recorded at the end of the year as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding the Early Learning Goals in each of the 17 areas.

These judgements are rigorously moderated internally, with partner schools and at Local Authority meetings to ensure they are accurate and secure.

Partnership with parents

We believe that education is a partnership between home and school and that links are essential for facilitating the smooth transition from home to school. They also serve to reassure parents/carers and help establish a trusting and friendly relationship. Parents are encouraged to share observations and experiences from home in Learning Journals to provide a detailed overview of the whole child's development and progress.

Information is shared with parents through Learning Journals, Reading Records, termly parent consultations, end of year report and we have an open-door policy for parents.

Parents are invited to sign a home/school agreement on child's entry to Oak class.

There is also an anonymous questionnaire which gives parents the opportunity to comment on their perceptions of school life and provision.

Inclusion

The EYFS is an inclusive curriculum and as such we meet the needs of all children. We support children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) according to the 2014 Code of Practice using the Inclusion Toolkit.

It is recognised that children may need support from sources outside school. Advice and help may be sought from other professionals including: health visitor, school nurse, portage workers, speech and language therapists, physiotherapist and staff from pre-school settings.

Children eligible for EYPP (Early Years Pupil Premium) are carefully monitored and specific needs identified and targeted e.g Talkboost intervention group or specialist resources if required.

Similarly, more able children are challenged appropriately to continuously develop their learning in depth, application and mastery of subjects. The Early Years staff are trained in Team Teach strategies to promote positive behaviour. We are a certified Makaton Friendly school and have disabled access. (See Local Offer on school website)

Children's independence in toileting will not be used as a criteria for refusing admission as managing own personal hygiene is part of the EYFS curriculum. However we strongly recommend that children are toilet trained before starting in Oak Class as this will enable them to be more confident and to access the curriculum more readily.

Safeguarding and Welfare requirements

Early years providers have a duty under section 40 of the Childcare Act 2006 to comply with the welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. All of the Early Years staff have completed safeguarding training that enables us to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect; and we have a designated person (Mrs Jacqueline Dalrymple, Acting Headteacher) within school to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children who liaise with local statutory children's services agencies as appropriate. (Refer to whole-school Safeguarding Policy)

Health And Safety

We adhere to the schools policies and guidelines on risk assessment and Health and Safety (please refer to Health & Safety Policy). We develop the children's responsibility towards Health and Safety issues through classroom routines (Health and Self care – Physical Development).

Continuous Quality Improvement

We are all reflective practitioners and experienced in self-evaluation. The school ensures protected transition time between part-time staff to reflect on short and long-term provision. We are developing methods to identify and manage our strategies for improvement. e.g EYFS action plan (May 2015) The Head Teacher, subject co-ordinators and staff monitor provision through observation, evaluation and discussion. Identified needs are met through attendance at courses, in-school support from LEA services, attendance at support group meetings (Glendale Hub) and visits to other settings.

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