



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

3.1 The EYFS has four main themes

A unique child

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be emotionally strong and independent when they feel secure in their relationships with parents or carers and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments

The physical environment and ethos of each setting play a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

The EYFS states:

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their talents and abilities as they grow up.'

At Hope Community School we aim to do this through a well-planned, play-based approach to learning and development that focuses on the individual child and their needs.

Starting school

3.2 Home visits

A family's first experience of the Foundation Stage at Hope Community School begins with a home visit. Home visits are arranged for children entering Reception class. They form the basis of the strong relationship between home and school which we aim to foster throughout each child's time at Hope Community School.

At the home visit the Class Teacher plus the Family Liaison Officer or a Teaching Assistant will visit the child's home to meet with the child and the child's parents/carers in their home environment. The aim of this visit is to enable children and families and staff to get to know each other before the official start date. Information is gathered about the child's home context, the child's development and health, and recent care/learning opportunities.

Parents/carers have the chance to ask questions and talk over any worries in a safe environment. Staff can explain the settling-in process and talk through what to expect at school.

Each family receives a Foundation Stage Handbook which provides further written details on the Foundation Stage at Hope Community School.

3.3 Open sessions for new children

Children new to Reception are invited to attend an open session, especially for them and their carers. This quiet session helps families with the next stage of settling-in, as the child recognises the members of staff who "came to my house", and can get to know the layout of the Reception environment with the support of their adult. During this visit they are encouraged to get to know their new environment with the help of the other children.

Settling in

During the initial weeks / settling in period, Foundation Stage staff focus on helping children to:

- separate from their parent/carer with growing confidence;
- feel settled, secure and valued in their new setting;
- be able to express their wants, needs and ideas;
- find security in the organisation and routine of the session;
- behave appropriately in a variety of settings within the school.

We encourage parents to be fully involved in supporting their child's start at school and to continue to be involved in all aspects of their development.

3.4 Induction

The start to the Foundation Stage is staggered, and only some new children start at each session. This is so staff can meet, welcome and get to know each child individually and personally, and to allow time for parent and child to feel at ease with the separation process. It may take a little while for the whole class to settle.

After the first six weeks or so, parents/carers are invited to a settling-in meeting to discuss how their child is getting on, and share the child's interests and achievements so far.

3.5 Home-school relationship

We aim to support families in making these early years at school as smooth and successful as possible. We offer flexible drop-off and collection timings so the start and finish of each day is at a calm, unhurried, pace. Foundation staff aim to be available, where possible, at the start and finish of every day to talk with parents and carers.

We aim to inform carers straight away if there are any concerns, or likewise any achievements, to share. We encourage parents to share developmental landmarks with us so that we can celebrate individual children's achievements, both at home and at school.

We ask parents to read with their child daily and to be encouraging and praising of their child's interest and efforts with all aspects of home learning. We aim to keep families regularly informed about the learning taking place in school and to offer advice on how to help at home.

We ask parents to sign a home-school agreement each year, which is designed to encourage home and school to work together for the benefit of each child.

Children's home learning will be further supported by the use of digital learning platforms, such as Google Classroom, Class dojo, Mathletics and Reading eggs.

3.6 Attendance

Full time education is an entitlement for each child from the age of 5, i.e. from Reception Class.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2017 statutory framework of the EYFS.

4.1 The EYFS framework

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

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

These seven areas describe knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five.

Personal, social and emotional development

Children learn to share and take turns through games, role play, dressing up etc., They are helped to show empathy for others through 'circle time' activities and in their everyday social interactions with each other. Small world imaginative play (e.g. Duplo, animal scenes, dolls house etc.) also helps them explore ways of expressing themselves. They learn to manage their own clothing and personal hygiene independently.

Physical development

This is a very important aspect of our curriculum. Children learn to balance, swing, climb, aim, throw, catch and bat balls, pedal and lots more. They find out about their own bodies and learn to challenge their limits, taking risks in a safe environment. They find out about using simple tools safely and carefully. They are supported in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food.

Communication and language

Children are encouraged to talk, talk, talk! They learn stories, poems, songs and rhymes and tell them to each other. There are lots of opportunities for listening and responding to ideas expressed in conversations and discussions.

Children follow instructions involving a sequence of ideas or actions and use talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking.

Mathematics

Everyday activities are planned involving -comparing and measuring -collecting and sorting -estimating, counting and putting into groups -finding things and describing where they are in relation to other objects 5 -looking at shapes all around and matching them up Children love to solve a problem and will develop their mathematical understanding as they play such as how role play provides an ideal opportunity to develop maths learning.

Literacy (reading and writing)

Looking at books together and play with story scenes and puppets. They explore words and writing in the world around them, learning to read and write letters, names and words. They find out about the alphabet and letter sounds through jingles, rhymes and songs and, by the end of Foundation stage, can begin to put letters together to make simple words.

Understanding the world

Children love to explore the world around them, looking at animals, creepy crawlies, natural objects, how things move, or grow or change. They are encouraged to use all of their senses to find things out - touching, smelling, looking, listening and tasting, where appropriate.

The children find out about the people in our community, things we all share and how we are different. They are encouraged to think about things that happened in a different time from now - before they were born or when they were babies. An integral part of this learning is using computers and exploring a range of modern technology – such as digital cameras, CD players, programmable toys.

Creative development

This includes drawing, painting, collage, model making, singing, making music with instruments, role play and drama. Children are encouraged to express themselves through a very wide range of creative activities. All of these areas of learning and development are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. At Hope Community School we plan for a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities, within each area of learning. We appreciate and fully endorse the benefits that outdoor learning can provide. Therefore, we plan for our curriculum provision with equal emphasis on indoor and outdoor learning and to include learning beyond our school.

4.2 Self-esteem, behaviour and relationships

In Hope Community School Foundation Stage, we are committed to meeting the individual needs of all children. The welfare of the children is central to our provision of care, learning and play. We believe all children deserve to be respected and valued and we provide experiences to support their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development in a warm, caring and secure environment. Through carefully planned activities, play opportunities and interactions, we aim to promote children's self-esteem and to support them in developing skills, knowledge and understanding as they explore their world. Children are encouraged and supported in making choices and decisions as active learners. Their progress is monitored regularly in order to ensure that individual needs are identified and provided for.

4.3 Learning about right and wrong

Children need to learn how to cope with strong feelings and what is, or is not, acceptable behaviour. We support children in managing their feelings and coping with difficult situations.

We encourage and praise children for behaving appropriately. We always treat children with respect and show, by example, appropriate ways to behave with others. We acknowledge that children have strong feelings that they may not know how to express. We help them to talk about what these feelings are and how to deal with any situations that arise.

We support the children in resolving conflict by talking through the effects of their behaviour on others and helping them to work out appropriate behaviour. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, we ensure that the child knows that it is the behaviour that is wrong, not the child who is bad.

We plan activities to allow children to explore right and wrong in a non-threatening context.

4.4 Context for learning

We offer a variety of activities, both planned and free choice, which provide opportunities to learn through play. We run a carefully planned programme of stories / themes / topics throughout the year to ensure that the children are given a wide range of active, real-life and everyday experiences to enhance their learning about their world. These themes/topics are chosen to reflect the children's interests and include visits in and around the locality. We offer a mixture of active and quiet times throughout the day, and the children have opportunities to participate in both indoor and outdoor activities.

4.5 Characteristics of Learning:

- Play and explore
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

When planning and designing learning opportunities in Foundation Stage we keep the Characteristics of Learning at the heart of our thinking. These characteristics develop and mature as the children grow through the school. Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

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

4.6 Physical environment

At Hope Community School we are committed to providing a welcoming and caring environment that provides for the children's safety and well-being and supports them in their development and learning.

We believe that the organisation and layout of the environment should enable children to be active, and involved in social and individual play activities and experiences.

4.7 Indoor provision

We create defined areas for different play activities to support the children in all six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.

We use the available space creatively and flexibly to provide opportunities for the children's imaginative play, movement and large-scale play activities. We provide opportunities for both floor play and table activities.

We create opportunities for children to access equipment and materials independently, and choose for themselves, by using low-level open-storage shelves and boxes.

We encourage the children to care for their environment by making some cleaning equipment (brushes, dustpans, cloths) available for them to access and use independently to clean and tidy up play areas.

4.8 Outdoor provision

We use the outdoor environment to offer a wide range of learning opportunities for investigation and exploration, thus developing all six areas of learning in the Foundation Stage.

Our planning for outdoors is intended to enhance and extend the planned learning opportunities of the indoor curriculum, as well as provide opportunities for independent, child-initiated learning to take place.

We offer regular opportunities for children to play in a natural environment of grass, trees and bushes.

We have daily opportunities for children to play outside, providing open space where they can run, as well as using fixed or other play equipment. We ensure that there are areas of shade and shelter.

4.9 Organisation of resources

We make resources accessible to the children, wherever possible, so that they can choose their activities independently. We organise resources and equipment so that children can find, use and return them safely and easily.

4.10 Display

We create a rich and stimulating environment by using visual and interactive displays. We provide display areas for children's own work, including pictures, drawings, writing and models.

We aim to ensure that displays are informative and relevant to all families within the local community.

4.11 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

5. Assessment

5.1 Assessment

We assess individual children's learning and progress on a regular basis in the Foundation Stage. Observations play a key part in this process, and help us plan the next steps for a child's learning. Children are observed learning both independently, and with the support of an adult. Once children use skills or knowledge independently we can say they have made progress in their learning and thinking.

Therefore, we base most of our judgements about progress and achievement on independent or child-initiated learning rather than on adult-led learning.

We keep a Profile of Achievement and Learning for each individual child. These are kept electronically using the school's pupil database. We add to these profiles regularly to show the range and depth of each child's learning and progress.

Further details of how we assess children's progress can be found in our Achievement policy

5.2 Reporting to parents:

A written report of each child's progress against age-related goals is provided for parents/carers at the end of Reception where the written report includes details of the child's progress towards the 17 Early Learning Goals outlined in the Foundation Stage Profile, indicating whether they are:

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

Parents and carers can find out more about how children's learning is planned for and assessed in Foundation Stage, and in particular for their child. As a school we offer regular formal opportunities for parents to learn about their child's progress and, in Foundation Stage, we initiate, facilitate and welcome informal opportunities to do this throughout each child's time with us

6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

7.1 Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

7.2 Keeping healthy

Availability of water

We have fresh drinking water and suitable cups readily available for children and adults working in Reception at all times. We encourage the children to help themselves to water, either with support or independently. We support the children in recognising that they need to drink water when they are thirsty, hot or tired, or feeling unwell.

7.2 Lunchtime arrangements

All Children eat a school meal together in the Hall (arrangements are made for children's medical, cultural and religious needs). Pupils may bring a packed lunch or go home for lunch. We encourage parents / carers to prepare healthy packed lunches.

We regularly update records of children's specific dietary requirements and keep them on our school database. We will make sure all staff, including the lunchtime and catering staff, are aware of children's dietary needs.

7.3 Snacks

We offer fresh fruit and raw vegetables as healthy snacks. Children are also offered milk. We like to make fruit, milk and meal times regular, family, social events. We encourage the children to take turns, share and be polite and to say 'please' and 'thank you'.

Children are encouraged to take part in preparing and serving fruit and milk. There are also regular opportunities for children to demonstrate independence and help themselves, as they might at home.

7.4 Paediatric First Aid

We have members of staff trained in Paediatric first aid. We always take at least one person on visits who has a current Paediatric first aid certificate. Please refer to our school policy, "Supporting children with medical needs" for information on administering medicines in school.

7.5 Transition - Helping children move on Reception Class to Year 1

During Year 1 we aim to make the organisation of learning and the daily routines as similar as possible to that offered in Foundation Stage, whilst moving into Key Stage 1 and following the National Curriculum. Once again learning takes place both indoors and outdoors: Year 1 have their own all-weather outdoor learning space which is used to complement and extend the indoor curriculum, encouraging children to be active, investigative learners.

Children in Reception Class and Key Stage One access the same facilities i.e. toilets, art and creative storage areas, shared indoor learning spaces, access to the café for lunch and collective, so moving from one-year group to the next is seen as a positive and familiar step.

We hope this policy offers the information you require on the Foundation Stage at Hope Community School. Answers to questions about the day-to-day routine and running of the Foundation Stage may be found in "Hope Community School Foundation Stage: Handbook to starting Reception Class.