

Hugh Joicey C of E Aided First School

Early Years Policy

November 2023

Love learning ~ Love nature ~ Love one another

Intent

The education we offer is based on the key principles:

- It builds on what children already know and can do
- It is inclusive
- It understands that children have different starting points and offers content that matches the needs of the children, and opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It encourages children to become active learners and encourages independence and resilience in the face of challenges.
- It understands the importance of a collaborative working partnership with parents and carers and the benefits of sharing successes and concerns with them.

Aims of the policy

- To ensure children have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, make good progress, becoming lifelong learners.
- To ensure quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes progress and no child is left behind.
- To ensure a close working partnership with parents and carers.
- To ensure that every child is included and supported.

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 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
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children **develop and learn 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. Miss A. Carr is the Reception class teacher and she works closely with 1 teaching assistant, Mrs Z. Rawlings, who is also our forest school leader. Miss Carr is the Key Worker responsible for the children's pastoral care. We work closely with other providers in the area, including 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. The core Christian Values underpin the ethos of our whole school. We make the most of our extensive rural school ground, focussing on active and outdoor learning and have regular sessions in our on-site forest school. We set up our environment for varied learning opportunities, building on the children's interests and individual stages of development. Through a balance of child initiated and adult directed activities, we ensure that 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, arrange for visitors to come into our class and take part in celebrations to stimulate and enhance our children's learning and experiences.

Implementation

The EYFS Curriculum

Oak Class children follow the good practice described in "Development Matters: Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage" (July 2021) and the "Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage" (September 2023)

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 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 achievements.

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 seven areas of learning, all crucial and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building the capacity to learn, form relationships, thrive and flourish as learners.

The three Prime areas are:

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal, Social and Emotional 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

Spoken language underpins all areas of learning and development. We aim to provide frequent and quality back and forth interactions between children and adults within a language-rich environment to build children's language effectively. We read frequently to children and engaging them in a variety of quality texts, then providing opportunities to use and embed new words. We aim for children to become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Physical Development is vital in children's development to enable them to lead happy, healthy and active lives. We aim to develop both fine and gross motor skills by providing games and opportunities indoors and outdoors to develop core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility. We aim to provide repeated and varied opportunities to develop fine motor skills to allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence, preparing them for learning in literacy activities.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is crucial for children to lead happy and healthy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. We aim to form strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults, to enable children to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children are supported to manage their emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Children will also learn to look after their bodies, including healthy eating and managing their personal needs. We also support children to form good friendships with other children, to cooperate and to resolve conflicts peaceably.

Literacy

We aim for children to develop a lifelong love of reading. Children will develop their language comprehension through talking about the world around them and the books, stories, non-fiction, rhymes, poems and songs children and adults enjoy together. We use Read Write Inc as our systematic, synthetic phonics programme to teach skilled word reading and decoding, which is taught right from the start of the Reception year. Writing involves spelling and handwriting and composition,

Mathematics We aim for children to develop a strong grounding in number. We aim for children to count confidently and develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. We aim to build children's mastery in maths. Children develop their reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. We support children to 'have a go' in maths and talk about their thinking. They understand that it is OK to make mistakes.

Understanding the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. We aim to provide frequent and varied personal experiences to increase children's knowledge and sense of the world around them. We include as many visits out of school as we can, and invite important members of the community to visit school. We include a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems to foster understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. Through our work in understanding the world, we aim to enrich and widen children's vocabulary, which will later support reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design: It is important for children to regularly engage with the arts, and to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, to develop children's artistic and cultural understanding and support their imagination and creativity. Children should see, hear and participate in high quality creative experiences, to develop their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts.

In addition, Oak Class children attend weekly swimming lessons in the Summer Term at the Swan Centre, Berwick and visit the Forest School at least once a week with an accredited Forest School Leader and teaching assistant (see Forest School leaflet and progression grids).

Planning and Teaching

We plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. We take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have additional needs, we consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant agencies where appropriate.

In planning and guiding activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in our practice.

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

The Setting and Routines

The Learning Environment

The classroom is organised so children can explore and learn safely and securely. Children have access to the inside and outside environment at various points throughout the day, which research has shown to have a positive effect on children's development. Spending time outdoors gives opportunities for healthy minds and bodies and learning things differently to when children are indoors, giving them a different perspective. All of the curriculum can be explored outside.

Children can arrive at school from 8:30am and the teaching day starts at 9:00am and finishes at 3:15pm.

There is a daily whole school assembly from 9:00am until approximately 9:15am. Fruit is provided free of charge at snack time (10:20am). Milk is provided free of charge until the term of the child's fifth birthday. Snack time is followed by morning break on the yard or field, weather permitting, with children from Cherry or Beech class.

Lunch is from 12:00pm to 1:00pm. Meals are free for children up to the end of Year 2.

Many children travel by bus or taxi or can be collected from the school gate at 3:15pm.

Transitions

We recognise that it is a huge change for children leaving the familiar pre-school settings and home and starting full time in Reception. We aim to make this transition as smooth as possible by:

- Teachers visit new starters in Pre-School, and Pre-School children eat lunch in the school hall, where they can familiarise themselves with routines and meet staff
- Teachers and Teaching Assistants visit Pre-School throughout the year, to pop in and allow children to become familiar with staff in school.
- Four 2 hour visits to Oak Class for new starters in the Summer term.
- Transition meeting with Pre-School leader (Rebecca Clark) and Pre-School staff.
- New starters meeting for parents.
- Parent information pack provided, including 'About Me' booklet for parents and children to return to school.
- Open door policy

- Parent consultations termly, beginning in the Autumn Term
- Parent open mornings.

At the end of Reception year, we facilitate transition to Year 1 by working closely with the KS1 teacher, sharing all final assessments and reports, including characteristics of effective learning. There are lots of opportunities for the children to visit the KS1 classroom, and for the KS1 teacher to visit Oak Class.

Observation, Planning and Assessment

Teachers, teaching assistants, the Forest School leader and other members of staff around school observe children in their activities. Observations are part of the ongoing assessment process and are used to assess individual needs and inform future planning for next steps of learning. We use Seesaw, an online learning journal to record observations of learning and share learning and experiences with parents/carers. Observations added to online learning journals by parents/carers are also taken into account when planning next steps, and are shared in class to encourage discussions, conversations and acquisition of new vocabulary.

Baseline assessment is undertaken at the beginning of the academic year and cross referenced with transition information from previous providers. We undertake the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment, in alignment with current expected practice. Children with additional needs are assessed in more depth following our Inclusion policy.

Children's progress is monitored using the Development Matters framework, updated (July 2021). During termly data drops, children will be identified as on or not on track. Data is finally recorded at the end of the year as Emerging or Expected the Early Learning Goals in each of the 7 areas. These judgements are moderated internally and externally with partner schools to ensure they are accurate and secure.

Partnership with Parent/Carers

We believe that education is a partnership between home and school and that these 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/carers are encouraged to share observations and experiences from home on the online learning journal to provide a detailed overview of the whole child's development and progress. Information is shared through the online learning journal, Reading Records, termly parent consultations, end of year report, open mornings and we have an open door policy for parents/carers.

Parents are invited to sign a home/school agreement on 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.

We encourage a positive partnership by:

- Holding parent induction meetings before children start in Reception
- Inviting all Reception children into the class before they start.

- Offering curriculum workshops for parents throughout the year with subject coordinators.
- Giving parents regular opportunities to discuss progress.
- Ongoing liaison with parents as detailed above.
- Providing parents with a curriculum overview
- Providing a written report for parents in the Summer Term.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the teacher if they have any concerns
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, home and school: open mornings, assemblies, sports events etc.

Inclusion

The EYFS is an inclusive curriculum and as such we meet the needs of all children. We plan to meet the needs of all genders, children with special educational needs and disabilities, children who are more able, children from social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We support children SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) according to the 2015 Code of Practice. Early identification of special educational needs is crucial to enable us to plan appropriately and to support the development of each child. Developmental progress and any concerns are always discussed with parents/carers and the SENCo provides advice and further information. Appropriate steps are taken in accordance with the SEND policy. It is recognised that children may need support from outside agencies. Advice and help may be sought from other professionals including; health visitor, school nurse, portage workers, speech and language therapists, physiotherapist, play therapist and other members of school staff, including our registered Thrive practitioner.

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

Equally, more able children are challenged appropriately to continuously develop their learning in depth, application and mastery of subjects.

Safeguarding

Early Years practitioners have a duty of care to comply with the welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2020). All Early Years staff have completed safeguarding training that enables them to recognise signs of potential abuse and neglect, and staff knowledge is regularly updated. Miss Carr is Deputy Safeguarding Lead in school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school is Mr C. Roberts (Headteacher), who takes responsibility for safeguarding children. The Designated person will liaise with relevant children's services agencies

as appropriate. We follow the policy and procedures set out in the whole school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care that involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that the vast majority of children are able to carry out themselves. Depending on the child's age and stage of development, they may need support in this. We encourage parents to help their child become independent in these tasks as soon as possible. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff and parents work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child. See our whole school Intimate Care Policy for more details and procedures followed.

Health and Safety

We adhere to the school's policies and guidelines on risk assessment and health and safety (refer to the whole school health and safety policy). We develop children's responsibility towards health and safety issues through classroom routines, as exemplified in the Personal, Social and Emotional Development area of learning.

Continuous Quality Improvement

We are all reflective and evaluative practitioners. The school ensures transition time between part time staff to reflect on short and long term provision. We have developed an Early Years Action Plan to identify areas for improvement and this identifies targets, actions and impact of these actions. The headteacher, subject coordinators and other staff and outside agencies (e.g. School Improvement Partner) monitor provision through observation, work and planning scrutinies, evaluation and discussion. Identified needs are met through attendance on courses, in school support from LEA services, attendance at early years partnership meetings and visits to other settings.

Anna Carr
Early Years Teacher
Review date - July 2025

Appendix 1
Statutory Policies and Procedures for the EYFS

Policy	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	<i>CP Policy Safeguarding Policy ICT - Acceptable Use Policy, E-Safety Policy</i>
Administering Medicines Policy	
Emergency Evacuation Policy	<i>School Evacuation Plan</i>
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	<i>CP and Safeguarding Policy Volunteers Policy</i>
Procedures for dealing with concerns and complaints	