



# Early Years Policy

Review: Spring 2022  
Next Review: Spring 2024

The Governors and staff at Hemington Primary School recognise the importance of Early Years Education in ensuring that each child has a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can build a foundation for a love of learning. We ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

## Aims

- To give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- To enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a secure, nurturing and friendly atmosphere.
- To offer awe and wonder moments to spark natural curiosity and the ability to ask and answer questions.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To offer a balance of planned adult led and child-initiated activities, both indoors and outdoors.
- To work alongside parents to meet each child's individual needs to ensure they reach their full potential.
- To recognise the different starting points, stages of development and celebrate strengths and achievements.

## Curriculum

*“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to achieve their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. 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 abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early year's services, they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.”*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Hemington, all children join us, full time in the August of the academic year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four overarching principles:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Developing

## A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We encourage our children to develop a positive attitude to learning through praise and encouragement, including the use of celebration and rewards. All children and their families are valued. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. Early identification of special educational needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school's SENDCO is called upon for further information and advice.

## **Positive Relationships**

Children work in a small class, which has a mix of Reception, Year 1 and 2 pupils. Developing a positive relationship and secure attachment with the adults in their class, enables them to feel safe and have their emotional needs supported. We recognise parents are the child's first and foremost educators and we work strongly to develop strong links with them. We do this through:

- Our EYFS Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant visiting pre – school settings to meet the children in a familiar setting and talk to key workers to gather information.
- Inviting the children along with a key worker from the pre-school setting, prior to starting our school.
- Home Visits may be offered to families of children with SEND or specific concerns, where the transition to school may be more complex.
- Offering two transition days for the children to take part in a typical school day; one of these days will include lunch.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns, making full use of our open-door policy.
- Encouraging parents to take an active role in supporting learning at home through engagement with topic-based homework on our online platform, Seesaw and reading with their child.
- Holding two parents' evenings a year. These take place during the Autumn and Spring terms in which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress.
- Providing an annual pupil report detailing attainment and progress.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, the EYFS teacher acts as a 'Key Worker' to all children in the EYFS cohort, supported by the Teaching Assistants. Staff in the Foundation Stage meet regularly to share good practice and discuss current issues.

## **Enabling Environments**

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

## **Observation, Assessment, Planning**

On entry to school, all children complete a baseline assessment to help adults plan the curriculum and the progress children will make through this. The Reception Baseline Assessment consists of a series of small tasks and activities that help adults understand the stage of development each child has reached as they enter our school. The information obtained during the baseline assessment will be communicated to parents and reported to the DFE to contribute to their national and local data.

We plan around half-termly topics which are then used as a guide for weekly planning. Plans may be changed in response to the needs, interests and achievements of the children. Throughout the year, we make regular observations and assessments of the children's learning and this informs future planning. We track the children against their age-related expectations. Every child has their own Learning Journey in Reception, which is based upon ongoing observations, incidental and formal assessments, photographic evidence, discussions with parents and any other relevant information. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. In the Summer term, the children are assessed on the Early Learning Goals and parents receive a report which informs them of their child's progress in the 17 aspects of learning and their characteristics of learning. Judgements are then made as to whether each child is at the expected standard in each of the Early Learning

Goals. The profile must be completed for all children, including those with special education needs or disabilities. All information is then sent to the local authority.

## **Learning Environment**

The classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children can find and locate equipment and resources independently. This allows independent enhancement of play by moving resources freely around the classroom. They have a secure and enclosed outdoor area which is solely used by Class One. Outdoor learning activities offer the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum framework provides a structure of learning opportunities through which we develop the different aspects of early education. The EYFS is made up of 7 areas.

### **Three Prime Areas:**

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Physical Development
3. Communication and Language

### **Four Specific Areas:**

1. Literacy
2. Mathematics
3. Understanding the World
4. Expressive Arts and Design

At our school children meet learning opportunities within a happy, secure and interesting environment through practical activity, enquiry and purposeful play, with consolidation through practice, talk and reflection. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. The prime areas are particularly crucial in igniting the curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. These areas help build children's capacity to learn, build relationships and thrive. These prime areas are then strengthened and applied through the teaching of the specific areas.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning within the Foundation Stage**

In planning and guiding children's activities in the foundation stage our staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and incorporate these in their planning and practice. The Early Years Foundation Stage identifies characteristics of effective teaching and learning

The three characteristics are: -

### **1. Playing and Exploring.**

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They can express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

### **2. Active Learning**

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

### **3. Creating and Thinking Critically**

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest,

offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning

Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.