

Handford Hall Primary School

EYFS Policy 2026/27



Achieve, Believe, Celebrate

1. Aims

At Handford Hall Primary School, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children therefore giving them the strong foundation for their future. We ensure that all our children develop into independent and lifelong learners.

As outlined in Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage:

'Children develop quickly in the early years, and early years practitioners aim to do all they can to help children have the best possible start in life. Children have a right, spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender'.

As stated in the 2021 EYFS Framework:

'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. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up'.

Our high expectations will enable children to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We ensure that all our children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start in Key Stage 1.

2. Overarching principles

Four guiding principles should shape practice in Early Years' settings. These are:

- 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. (See "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.15). The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3. The areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in Early Years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The prime areas are:

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

The specific areas are:

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

Learning and development

The classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely as well as independently. Learning and Development is categorised into three prime areas of learning:

Communication and Language:

- Listening
- Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

Physical Development:

- Gross Motor Skills
- Fine Motor Skills

Personal, social and emotional development:

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Additionally, there are four specific areas of learning:

Literacy:

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

Mathematics:

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

Understanding the world:

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

Expressive arts and design:

- Creating with Materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning:

- Playing and exploring - engagement
- Active learning - motivation
- Creating and thinking critically - thinking

4. EYFS Practitioners

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development. Practitioners working with the youngest children are expected to ensure a strong foundation for children's development in 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.

We expect our EYFS practitioners to:

- Recognise children as competent and influential individuals who need to be involved in their own assessment
- Work with parents and other adults who are important to the child
- Recognise each child's individual route to learning
- Build a broad picture of the child which ranges widely, incorporating and interconnecting all the areas of Learning and Development

Our EYFS practitioners must:

- Undertake systematic observations and assessments to plan to meet young children's individual needs
- Plan and provide experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development as they progress towards the Early Learning Goals

5. EYFS Curriculum

As part of our best practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Provide early intervention for those who need additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and where needed outside agencies
- Plan challenging learning experiences for all our children, based on the individual needs of the child
- Provide opportunities for our children to engage in adult led learning and self - initiated learning
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors
- Plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development.

Our approach to teaching and learning in reception classes:

- Purposeful and meaningful Play underpins everything we do at HH. It also underpins learning and all aspects of children's development. Through play, children develop language skills, their emotions and creativity, social and intellectual skills. At HH teachers and practitioners value play and provide safe but challenging environments that support and extend learning and development.
- All reception children participate in structured, Maths, Literacy, phonics, and Talk for Writing sessions every morning.
- Communication and Language skills (oracy), and early literacy skills are the main key drivers in HH EYFS provision, alongside the individual's personal, social and emotional development.
- All other areas of EYFS curriculum are taught in the afternoon sessions but are linked and interwoven amongst the whole of our EYFS provision.
- Teaching of Mathematics focuses primarily on adopting an early fascination and deep interest in number, shape and pattern, in every child. Number and numerical patterns alongside problem solving lies at the heart of everything we teach, as described in the Maths ELG. At HH we believe this is often the strongest predictor for later maths outcomes. This also reflects the government's continued commitment to strengthen the teaching of early numeracy so that all children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can start year 1 with a strong and confident foundation in number. Practitioners and teachers teach children about shape, space and measures, as part of a well-rounded curriculum, as set out in the revised mathematics educational programme.
- Creative and Outdoor learning is an integral part of our EYFS curriculum at HH. We use this to strengthen learning that has happened within in the classroom and to provide a holistic approach to future learning attributes, that includes discovery, experimentation, risk taking as well as learning about and connecting to the natural world.

6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

- Assessments are made in line with the EYFS requirements
- Daily practice includes observations of children's development and progress that will be recorded in books
- Discussions are held with all adults in EYFS about individual children's development and next steps
- Significant observations of children's' achievements are recorded in their learning journeys which are shared with parents
- An end of year report is provided to all parents/carers on their child's development against the seven areas of learning
- At the end of Reception, children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals for each area of learning.

Assessment of children's progress is continuous. Baseline assessment is completed within 2 weeks after admission. Further progress is recorded in the Foundation Stage Profile (a statutory requirement) at the end of each term.

7. Transitions

At Handford Hall Primary School we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both parents and children. At HH we have established a strong set of procedures for transitions to be as smooth and stress free as possible. All children starting in our reception classes are offered a home visit alongside a visit to their pre-school setting prior to their child starting reception. This gives children the security of meeting with their teacher in a safe, familiar environment and gives parents time to ask questions and share knowledge or any concerns they have about their child.

Children are also invited to attend two sessions in their new class and to meet their teacher and teaching assistant. This gives children the security of seeing and experiencing some of the exciting learning opportunities in their new setting, and to ignite their excitement for starting school in September.

In the summer term, all our Reception children prepare for the transition to year 1.

Reception teachers pass on their knowledge of each child's development, progress and achievement towards the early learning goals to ensure that all teachers have a well - rounded picture of the children prior to starting the new school year.

8. Health and Safety and Safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We

follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance and adhere to the OMAT's Safeguarding Policy.