

Hindley J and I School



Early Years Policy

Approved:

Signed on behalf of the school _____ **Date:**

Signed on behalf of the governors _____ **Date:**

POLICY FOR EY

Document Purpose

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Hindley J and I in relation to the teaching and learning experiences within the Early Years. It sets out a framework within which all staff operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years.

Audience

This policy document, having been presented to and agreed upon by the whole staff and the Governing Body, is available to all staff and school governors. A copy of the document is kept in the head teacher's office, as well as being published on the school website.

Aims

Our aims in the Early Years are as follows:

- To introduce all children in Early Years to school life in a secure, stimulating environment;
- To give each child an equal opportunity to flourish and to develop his/her full potential;
- To develop confidence, an aesthetic awareness, a sense of fair play, and sound moral values for all children;
- To support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. To enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential;
- To provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school;
- To set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1;
- To use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress;
- To develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children;
- To provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

Early Years is based on four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Hindley J and I School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In Early Years, we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of all children;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary;
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Hindley J and I School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school during our open days/tours of the school;
- Providing a handbook of information about Early Years;
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement;
- Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in the Early Years Class for three Inspire sessions in the Summer Term before starting school;
- Providing an induction meeting for Early Years parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have;

- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment;
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Early Years staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them;
- Publishing a Long Term overview of the year detailing the areas of learning and the theme of each half-term as well as a class newsletter every half term;
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading or the calculation policy;
- Offering three parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed;
- Sending a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Early Years;
- Asking parents to sign a generic permission form for visits, food tasting and photographs etc;
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as assemblies, curriculum workshops, Christmas productions and sports day etc;
- Parents are invited to contribute towards the children's Learning Journeys.

Enabling Environments

At Hindley J and I School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, 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.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe

that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Developing

The EY Curriculum – Our curriculum reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EY. These 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 three Prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

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

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Early Years pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Letters & Sounds" document and in line with school policy.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.

'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.'

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need 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.

- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

'When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.'

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Assessment

During the first half term in Early Years, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using the Reception Baseline assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of Early Years, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for Early Years.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in Early Years takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps records and learning journals and records examples of each child's work. This provides a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking system (Target Tracker). We record each child's level of development to be 'beginning', 'working within' or 'secure' within the Development Matters age-bands.

The Baseline Data, On Entry Data and Assessment Data at the each term is sent to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report.

Moderation of Early Years outcomes takes place with the LA in the Summer Term.

Inclusion

All staff at Hindley J and I are responsible for ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnic origin and social circumstances have access to the whole curriculum, and the opportunity to make the greatest progress possible in all areas of the curriculum, while in our school.

Special Educational Needs

Children with special needs receive extra support within the classroom from the EY staff and outside agencies if appropriate. Staff seek guidance and advice for these children from the Inclusion Manager. See whole school policy on inclusion for more detail.