



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 to 5 years. In our school we have two full-time reception classes. Children who have turned four by the 1st September of that school year are offered a full time place in one of our reception classes, with sixty places available altogether. The reception classes have one full time teacher each and one full time Learning Support Assistant. To ensure best practice and continuity, our Foundation Stage staff work closely with colleagues at our partner primary schools, Hallam Fields and Riverside to share planning, activities and resources.

Aims

At Highcliffe Primary School, we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and ambitious lifelong learners.

We will encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations, which are reinforced through the 5Rs, will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start school

The curriculum

The Nursery and Reception follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships



- Enabling environments
- Learning and development

A unique child

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, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration / sharing assemblies and rewards to encourage pupils to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Learning and development

Our Foundation Stage has two classrooms and a shared outdoor area. Our learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are promoted through a range of different areas so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Areas of learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime areas** of learning:

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

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics



- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

At Highcliffe Primary School, all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout FS our child interest based planning ensures that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of FS. We follow a half termly theme based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language. Using the objective led planning approach ensures personalised learning for each and every child.

Characteristics of effective learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the Foundation Stage teacher plans activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics 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



- **Creating and thinking critically:** children have and develop their own idea, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys, girls, children with SEND, children who are more-able, children from social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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.

We will provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the SENDCo and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the Speech and Language Service, the educational psychologist and others. We adhere to the equal opportunities and inclusion policies of our school.

Pupil premium: we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

Throughout FS children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage'.



Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources: observations of the children in play; in adult led activities; through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence using the online portal Tapestry to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us plan for children's next steps in learning. Every child has an online learning journey via Tapestry, which is accessible by parents and carers, in which we record our observations and keep samples of children's work.

At the start of each autumn term, Reception children are assessed during the first three/four weeks of school against learning statements in the 7 areas of learning to determine a baseline or starting point for their future learning. This is a statutory assessment which will be reported by the end of the child's first half term in school. Judgements will be based on the adult's observations of children during activities and play. There will not be any form of testing and parents' views on their children as learners will be taken into account.

From September onwards, our children's knowledge, skills and understanding will be tracked throughout their Reception year and assessed against the ELGs at the end of the academic year to establish an end of FS achievement and learning profile for each child in preparation for their transition to Year 1.

Transitions

At Highcliffe we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transition to ensure that our children and parents are confident and secure when facing the challenges of a new year group.

Our school holds a meeting in the summer term before children start in September to provide parents with key information, school expectations, knowledge on our curriculum and assessment and advice on how they can help their child. Some families may be offered a home visit by the class teacher, especially if their child did not attend a nursery or pre-school. In the summer term, children will have the opportunity to meet their new teacher in order to help them prepare for their new experiences.

At the beginning of the school year, Reception children may be offered a staggered start to ensure that they have time to feel welcome and to support them in exploring their new environment. This is followed by a 'settling in period' in which activities are planned to ensure that children have the time to become secure and familiar with the new routines.

At the end of the Reception year, children have the opportunity to meet with their new teacher in their new classroom prior to starting in Year 1. At the end of each



academic year, teachers are given the opportunity to share their knowledge of each child's progress, including pupil tracking and assessment data as well as pastoral and well-being information in order for the new teacher to build a well-rounded picture of each child.

Partnership with parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure that they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and feel comfortable in our setting. We offer a variety of different opportunities to parents to come into school including coffee mornings, special assemblies and curriculum workshops. Parents are welcome to share information about their child and to ask questions and discuss their child's learning with the class teacher.

We believe that parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played as well as their future role in educating their children. We make good use of the online learning journey portal Tapestry to share information about children's experiences and achievements and parents can do the same with activities outside school. This information helps to build a well-rounded picture of each child.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child's education from the very start of their school journey. They will be invited on school trips and visits and to join in with a wide variety of activities from book sharing sessions to sports' day. Parents are also encouraged to support children's learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and by sharing assemblies and whole class activities.

At Highcliffe we value the importance of the three-way relationship between children, parents and staff, as it enables children to make good progress and to maximise their potential. We offer two formal parents' evenings a year for teachers and parents to discuss each child's progress on an individual level and we also provide a formal annual report during the summer term. Parents are also welcome to meet the class teacher informally as and when required to ask questions, seek clarification or raise issues. We upload children's next steps to Tapestry, so parents are always aware of what their children are currently working on.

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 Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to our school's safeguarding policy.



We are a healthy school and our children under 5 receive free milk and all children have access to fresh drinking water and fruit from a government scheme. Reception children are also eligible for Universal Infant Free School Meals or can choose to bring a healthy packed lunch.

The FS classrooms have access to their own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene, hand washing techniques and throughout the year we plan a variety of cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.

S. Fewster
Executive Headteacher
April 2017