



HAWKESLEY CHURCH PRIMARY ACADEMY

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 'Let your light shine' Matthew 5:16

Introduction

As a Church of England and Methodist school our Christian foundation shapes our approach to Early Education. At Hawkesley, we believe that our school's purpose is to provide the best opportunities for, and experiences of education, for local children of all faiths and none, in a Christian context. We do this through providing an education rooted of empowerment for all. We seek to equip all our children to realise their God-given gifts and '*let their light shine*' Matthew 5:16.

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage shares:

"All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential. (EYFS, 2024)

We believe to be an effective Church School providing high-quality Early Years experiences creates an effective foundation on which children can build the rest of their lives.

At Hawkesley Church Primary Academy we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Children begin our school with varied experiences and learning. The vast majority of children entering Reception have attended our Nursery class. It is the privilege of the staff in Nursery and Reception to take on the task of building upon the children's previous experiences. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/carers, and all staff work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Intent

The intention of our Early Years curriculum is to teach key knowledge which will help to develop fundamental skills across the seven areas of learning and beyond. We strive to give

each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which to develop independent and fearless lifelong learners. We demonstrate this through rich and stimulating learning experiences, following the EYFS Framework and guidance from Birth to Five Matters and Development Matters as supporting documents.

Aims of the EYFS

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, and ready to face the challenges ahead. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

We aim to:

- To provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, secure and enabling environment where children feel happy and have the confidence to develop relationships and experience new learning opportunities.
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- To provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development, both indoors and outdoors.
- To use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress and achieve their full potential.
- Enable choice, decision-making and problem solving, fostering independence and self-confidence;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions;
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Learning and Development in EYFS

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- The seven areas of learning and development and the educational programmes;
- The early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year

- The assessment requirements (when and how the practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents and/or carers).

There are seven areas of learning and development. They are split into prime and specific areas. The three **prime areas** of learning and development are:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children will be encouraged to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

Communication and Language

Children will be provided opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development

Children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

The four **specific areas** of learning and development are:

Literacy

Children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

Mathematics

Children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, space and measures.

Understanding the World

Children will be guided to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive arts and design

Children will be enabled to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

Overarching Four Principles

The four guiding principles shape the practice in our EYFS. 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and or/ carer;
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

Planning in EYFS

Planning opportunities build on and extends what children already know and can do. Our planning puts the principles of the EYFS into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children to understand and consider their current interests, development, and learning. All EYFS staff are committed to working together and are involved in this process.

EYFS staff consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development. EYFS Staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capabilities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. It is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the prime areas. Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, teachers will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and, where appropriate, make an inclusion referral.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned purposeful play and a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Learning through play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play, which is guided by adults. Teachers respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and key workers to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All staff who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process

Formative assessment

This form of assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. EYFS staff observe children to understand their stage of development, interests and learning

styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. Formative assessment may take the form of formal observations, informal observations, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated examples of work, photographs and information from parents/carers. Each child has an online, individual Learning Journal in which key evidence is recorded. Next steps in learning are identified. Parents and/or carers are kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development through daily contact with EYFS staff and regular meetings. Teachers address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals. In the EYFS we use 'age related ranges' to make judgments about children's progress, on-going assessments feed into this.

Evidence collection does not take teachers away from their interactions with children. Any observations made using 'Arc Pathway' are purposeful and help build a picture of the child's development. School leaders are aware of this when monitoring teaching and learning in the early years and teachers are encouraged to draw on their knowledge of the children. This is supported in the EYFS:

"When forming a judgement about whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, teachers should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. This is enough evidence to assess a child's 12 individual level of development in relation to each of the ELGs. Recorded written or photographic evidence is not required." Jan 2024.

Summative assessment

When children start in Reception, they must undertake the statutory 'Reception Baseline Assessment'. This will provide an opportunity for your child to have valuable one- to-one time with their teacher at an early stage, so the teacher can get to know your child better. It will provide a helpful snapshot of where your child is when they enter reception, so they can be supported in the most appropriate way.

The EYFS Profile is used to summarise all of the assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements in the seven areas of learning at the end of the Reception year. The profile provides parents/carers with an assessment of a child's attainment against expected levels. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. EYFS staff must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or are not yet reaching expected levels (emerging). This information is submitted to the local authority.

Books and Marking in EYFS

Every child in EYFS has a Literacy/Drawing club book that showcases the child's learning throughout the academic year. Various activities that are planned for children in the EYFS are practical and not recorded however pertinent pieces are recorded in books.

Monitoring of teaching and Learning

Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out in accordance with school policy. This includes observations of teaching and learning, pupil voice, learning walks and book looks. The Senior Leadership Team carries out monitoring.

The Importance of play

“Children through play are unraveling the world at their own pace, savouring new experiences as they unfold, reconstructing and revising them. Essentially the child is in control. This active exploration, this involvement and the sense of ownership of the activity and experience enables the child to feel sustained and satisfied.” Heaslip(1994)

At Hawkesley we do not make a distinction between work and play in the Early Years. We support children’s learning through planned play activities and decide when child initiated or adult-led/guided play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves. Children are given the opportunity to explore and discover within a safe and supportive environment.

Play underpins the delivery of the EYFS curriculum. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The children 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. It provides the mechanism for the children to gain mastery over their world and is an important medium through which skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, intellectual and educational development and acquisition of social and behavioural skills.

Play can be children working alone, with other children or working with adults engaged in a wide range of activities from all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Play is about learning through being active.

Through play children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

The Learning Environment

We aim to create an warm, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop in independence.

Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Here are some of the zones we have in each indoor space:

- Construction
- Water
- Small World
- Domestic role-play
- Reading
- Mark-making/Writing
- Maths
- Creative

Here are some examples of the zones we have in our outdoor spaces:

- Sand area

- Water play
- Planting
- Construction area
- Gross motor – climbing equipment

Staffing and Organisation

The total number of places available in Nursery is 24. We offer full time provision.

Staffing consists of a Nursery Manager and 2 teaching assistants, all known as EYFS practitioners.

There is 1 Reception class, with spaces for 30 children. There is currently a job share between a teacher (Tues/Weds/Thurs) and the Assistant Headteacher (Mon/Fri) and 1 full time teaching assistant.

There are times in Nursery when the children are split into ‘family groups’, e.g. for Phonics and snack/circle time.

All staff have the appropriate qualifications to meet statutory requirements. We are always aiming to improve our teaching, skills, and knowledge and understanding through training opportunities, which comprise of in class support, observations of colleagues, professional dialogue, and attendance at network meetings. Miss Green (AHT) is responsible for the EYFS.

Transition

We aim to ensure that the children experience a smooth and positive transition as they move from pre-school/home setting to Nursery, Nursery to Reception and Reception to Year 1.

The aim is for all staff to have:-

- A shared understanding of what the principles of the EYFS look like in effective practice
- Understand and value the EYFS
- Promote best practice for transition by considering the transition experience of the children and effective transfer of information, including the EYFSP and characteristics of effective learning.
- Use information about children to plan a relevant curriculum
- To support this we provide opportunities for staff to:-
 - Observe the children in their current groups
 - Take part in moderation of profile books and writing assessments
 - Discuss each child’s individual needs
 - Hold induction stay and play sessions for new children and their parents (Nursery and Reception)
 - Have regular slots in the curriculum where children visit their new class

Working in partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents/carers are the child’s first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and staff work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child’s development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- Holding a stay and play session for new children before they start school
- Providing termly parent workshop/drop-in sessions to provide parents with a chance to support their child within school
- Holding regular parent meetings to provide information discussing progress, celebrating success and sharing individual targets
- Keeping Class Dojo pages up-to-date with relevant information
- Using online observations and assessment profiling (Arc Pathways) for parents to engage with
- Providing an annual written report including observations (Arc pathway) to parents to celebrate their child's successes

Equal Opportunities

At Hawkesley we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual. Staffs, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Children with special educational needs will be given support as appropriate to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Teaching Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Inclusion Policy.

Provisions in Nursery and Reception include a changing room, which contain a changing bed, shower and toilet.

The school's SENDCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to key workers and parents/carers, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see the school's Inclusion Policy.

Safeguarding and Welfare requirements

At Hawkesley we take the necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework, legal requirements. We also follow the Child protection/safeguarding policy of the school and staff are fully trained and aware of procedures in this area.

Risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor environments and particular activities are carried out on a regular basis. All staff are involved in this process. Additional risk assessments for the Nursery and Reception are carried out by the Site supervisor.

It is our policy at Hawkesley to have all personal mobiles stored in a safe place whilst supervising children.

Cameras and iPad's are used to record progress and to enable the engagement of parents in their child's learning, parents give permission for this to take place.

Personal electronic devices with imaging or sharing capabilities are never used to take photographs of children, staff have school equipment and this is used. Once the photographs are uploaded they are removed from the camera. Consent for photographs is obtained from parents/ carers and are stored appropriately.

At Hawkesley we comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 we use photographs taken with permission on:

- The school web site
- The school tv screen
- On display in school
- Learning journals (Arc pathway)

Missing Children

In the unlikely event of a child going missing school policy will be followed. We will:

- immediately search the school premises, both indoors and outdoors
- contact the parent/carer
- if necessary inform the police
- review school security systems
- make any necessary changes to ensure the safety of children

Complaints Procedure

If a parent has a concern or complaint school policy will be followed. Any complaints are treated seriously and are investigated. Details are also provided in our Prospectus for parents.

Writing and reviewing the Early Years Foundation Stage policy

Our Early Years Foundation Stage Policy has been written by the academy, with due regard to statutory requirements, and has taken account of the guidance within the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Setting the Standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five document (DFE, 2021). It has been agreed by senior management and approved by Governors.

This policy relates to other policies including those for Safeguarding and Intimate Care.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated by the Governors and SLT and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Approved by LAB: October 2024

Review date: September 2026