

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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The Early Years Foundation Stage is the period of education from birth to 5 years. The Nursery works hard to ensure children make good progress from their starting points.

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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage,
Department for Education, 2017

At Halesowen college Nursery we believe that the EYFS is crucial in securing firm foundations as a building block for future learning. Children begin their journey at our Nursery through well-managed induction and transition. We recognise that every child is different, has a different starting point and may learn in different ways. Pupils at all levels are helped to reach their potential and we aim to develop strong parent partnerships. We value the input, and recognise the importance, of our parents and carers to the children's learning and development. Because of this, we ensure that there are numerous opportunities available for parents/ carers to get involved with Nursery

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child

At Halesowen College Nursery 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 group times and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At the Nursery we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, 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. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Learning and Development

We also, recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and practitioners working in the Foundation Stage build upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and carers and school staff work effectively together to support the learning and development of all children.

Areas of learning and development

There are seven areas of learning and development in the EYFS. These are split into the prime and specific areas. The prime areas are considered to be particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These **Prime Areas** are:

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

There are also 4 **Specific Areas**:

- Literacy
- Mathematical Development
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These seven areas of learning support the planning in the Foundation Stage and provide a framework for the learning environment. The curriculum for the early years identifies progress through the ages and stages towards early learning goals in each area. These goals are the established expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

All areas of the curriculum are equally important and are planned for to ensure that children receive a broad, balanced and challenging learning experience. We believe that the child should be at the heart of the planning and assessment process so that their experience, interests and learning styles can be explored and used to plan the next steps. All areas of learning depend on each other and are delivered through child initiated and adult led activities.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Staff plan activities with these in mind. They 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, and enjoy achievements; and
- Creating and thinking critically- children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching

Learning in the EYFS is done through whole class, adult directed and child-initiated activities.

Child initiated learning

Children will spend time learning through play. Adults will facilitate learning in the different areas to ensure that children are moving on with their learning.

Teaching group times

At certain times throughout the day, the children will come together for some direct, carefully planned, adult led teaching and activities. This allows for teaching of specific skills as well as supporting the children to get into good habits of learning e.g. listening carefully, learning as part of a group, taking turns, sitting still etc. Whole group sessions often take the form of carpet sessions and these are timetabled slots throughout the day. In these slots we focus on the areas of learning.

Phonics

Pre-school aged children will complete phonics sessions to prepare them for their transition to Primary school. We use intervention times to help support children who are falling behind in phonics to ensure that they make expected progress.

The Indoor Classroom Environment

We believe that the learning environment is especially important and aim to provide an attractive, well organised and carefully structured setting that supports both the child and the curriculum. We encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experiences. It will be rich and stimulating allowing all children to feel proud of their achievements. It will also be practical and purposeful, enabling young children to work independently, matching activities to learning styles and interests. It will be clean, tidy and inviting.

The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: art, fiddly fingers, cooking/snack, construction, exploration and discovery, malleable, maths, music, reading, role play, sand, small world, technology, water and writing areas. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment.

In addition, the learning environment will also include outdoors and the provision for outside play should complement and add to the provision in the classroom.

The Outdoor Classroom Environment

Our outdoor space also provides for a range of learning opportunities across the seven areas of learning. Children can explore and problem solve, following their own interests and ideas. There are different areas such as the mud kitchen, environmental/enquiry area, water wall, story and mark making areas plus many more. These provide opportunities for children to develop sustained shared thinking and other independent learning characteristics and skills across the early year's curriculum.

Parents as partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and teachers work together, the results have a positive impact on children's development and learning.

In the EYFS we ensure a strong relationship between parents and staff through:

- Transition books
- Open door policy whereby parents are actively encouraged to share ideas / information or any concerns, when they drop children off in the morning or collect children at the end of the day.
- Parents evenings/meetings
- Themed workshops (EYFS, Phonics/Reading, music and movement and maths)
- Online Learning Journeys
- Notice board/Newsletters
- website
- Communicating achievements to parents through the use of certificates, positive postcards and positive comments.
- Communicating concerns about behaviour. By following the behaviour, policy parents will be fully informed.
- Encouraging parents to share achievements at home using Tapestry.
- Stay and Play sessions linked to the curriculum e.g. physical workshop, supporting language and vocabulary development, literacy and mathematics

See Appendix 1

Admissions Policy

Parents/carers and their child are warmly invited to view the Nursery. If they wish to apply for a place, they need to complete an application form, which will be held on file. The Manager will contact parents in the term before their child's intended admission date and the offer of a place is made. Two settling in sessions will be booked before the child starts properly.

These play sessions enables the child to meet all the staff, their new friends, explore the surroundings and for parents/carers to ask any questions they may have.

Prior to admission all paperwork relating to the child must be completed by the parents/carers and shared with the child's Key Person. This includes full details of any support required for a child with a medical condition or special educational need.

Parents/carers are entitled to claim early education funding for 3 and 4 year olds or funding for 2 year old funding.

Parents/carers do not have to accept all the sessions offered and have a choice to split them with another setting if they so wish. Fees may also be charged if a child exceeds their 15 hours of funding across different settings. The fees are reviewed annually. We aim to be flexible about attendance patterns so as to accommodate the needs of individual children and families. We do require that children attend the minimum of 2 sessions.

We have introduced some 30 hour places to accommodate the local communities' needs but this will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Admissions Procedures

1. Applications to use the Nursery should be made to the Nursery Manager who will allocate places within the general priorities laid down by the College Management.
2. In the allocation of places, priority will be given to the children of students who might otherwise have to abandon their course.
3. Second priority will be given to staff working at the College.
4. Vulnerable children and families will be given next priority, allocation from outside agencies, families that come under the LAC criteria and families on a low household income that claim for their childcare provision (time for twos).
5. There are usually some places available for members of the local community and applications and enquiries are welcome.
6. Children numbers will be strictly regulated so that the maximum legally permitted number is not exceeded.
7. Prior to a child's attendance at the Nursery the parents or carers must complete and sign the contract and registration forms.

This provides the Nursery with the following vital information:

- Name, home address and date of birth of child
- Starting date and number of sessions per week required
- Name, address and telephone numbers of parents or carers
- Emergency contact telephone numbers
- Any special dietary requirements and/or allergies
- Name, address and telephone numbers of the child's doctor
- Health development checks and immunisation details
- Child's religion and language spoken at home
- Parental consent on emergency procedures

- Parental consent on trips/outings
 - Named people to collect child and password procedures.
 - Tapestry consent.
 - Safeguard consent.
 - Parental responsibility and who has legal contact with the child
 - Parental consent form in Early Years provision for the use of photographs, videos, or web
8. Parents or carers will also be asked to provide the Nursery with any further information, which they feel, will enable staff to take the best care of their child. This should include likes and dislikes in food, feeding habits and dummy/comforter use.

Planning in the EYFS

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each half term.

We include links between areas of learning and development. Learning objectives and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified. Planning is shared with parents and children at the beginning of each half term.

Short Term Planning

We identify specific learning objectives, activities, differentiation, deployment of adults and resources, to meet the learning needs of the children on a weekly and day-to-day basis. It allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification, informed by on-going observational assessment.

Assessment in EYFS

The monitoring of each child will take place through regular observations, discussions, photographs, record keeping and planned assessments. These will be compiled into a 'Learning Journey' using Tapestry, along with children's recorded learning. This is regularly reflected upon by the children themselves and is available for parents to look at. It is also shared during Parent's Evening. The 'Learning Journey' tracks each child's holistic development, interests and achievements.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

Each child's development is recorded against 17 early learning goals and divided between the 7 areas of learning and development. Judgments against these scales are made from observation of consistent and independent behaviour from children's self-initiated activities and focus activities. The EYFS profile provides teachers and parents/carers with reliable and accurate information about each child's level of development as they reach the end of the EYFS. Staff indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching levels 'emerging'.

Children will be defined as having reached a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS if they achieve at least the expected level in:

- The early learning goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and;
- The early learning goals in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

Early Interventions

After assessing and discussing individual pupil's progress, a half termly intervention programme is devised to meet the needs of children as they arise. Parents and Carers are fully informed about the purpose and nature of these interventions. We feel that early intervention is extremely important in order for pupils to fulfil their potential. Delivery of interventions will very much depend upon the child or group of children and their developmental stage/interests.

Special Educational Needs

It is important to ensure early identification of children who find some areas of learning challenging, so that strategies to help them can be put in place as soon as possible. Children will have an 'ISP', which is written by the SENCO in consultation with parents, support staff and the child. This will be reviewed regularly as the child progresses. Outside agencies will be consulted in partnership with the SENCO as needed. Individual planning is created when necessary.

Equal Opportunities

We will endeavour to raise children's awareness of themselves as individuals and their relationships with others and the outside world. All children will have equal access to all activities irrespective of gender, race or class and where there are cultural differences these will be given consideration.

British Values

We promote British values in our setting, through our ethos and through a range of cross curricular activities. These include celebrating British occasions and festivals, teaching kindness, respectfulness to others and empathy. As part of this learning, children develop mutual tolerance through the understanding and respect for cultural and religious beliefs and their similarities and differences.

Parent Partnership

Policy Statement

We believe that children benefit most from early year's education and care when parents and settings work together in partnership.

Our aim is to support parents as their children's first and most important educators by involving them in their children's education and in the full life of the setting. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development.

Some parents are less well represented in early year's settings; these include fathers, parents who live apart from their children but who still play a part in their lives as well as working parents. In carrying out the following procedures, we will ensure all parents are included.

When we refer to 'parents' we mean both mothers and fathers; these include both natural or birth parents as well as step-parents and parents who do not live with their children, but have contact with them and play a part in their lives. 'Parents' also includes same sex parents as well as foster parents.

'Parental responsibility' is all the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property.

Procedures:

- We have a means to ensure all parents are included – that may mean we have different strategies for involving fathers or parents who work or live apart from their children.
- We consult with all parents to find out what works best for them.
- We ensure ongoing dialogue with parents to improve our knowledge of the needs of their children and to support their families this includes children with additional needs and families who may be involved with Safeguarding and Child Protection agencies.
- We inform all parents about how the setting is run and its policies through access to written information, through the college website and through regular informal communication. We check to ensure parents understand the information that is given to them.
- We inform all parents on a regular basis about their children's progress.
- We involve parents in the shared record keeping about their children - either formally or informally - and ensure parents have access to their children's written/electronic developmental records.
- We provide opportunities for parents to contribute their own skills, knowledge and interests to the activities of the setting.
- We inform parents about relevant workshops and training.
- We consult with parents about the times of meetings to avoid excluding anyone.
- We hold meetings in venues that are accessible and appropriate for all.
- We welcome the contributions of parents, in whatever form these may take.
- We inform all parents of the systems for registering queries, complaints or suggestions.
- We provide opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum offered in the setting and about young children's learning, in the setting and at home.