

EYFS Policy and Information

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Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery, children may join the school in the term when they turn two years of age. The EYFS sets the standards that all Early Years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range and knowledge of skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The EYFS seeks to provide:

- **quality and consistency** in all Early Years settings, so that every child makes good progress and develops at their own individual rate/pace;
- **a secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and area assessed and reviewed regularly;
- **partnership working** between practitioners and with parents and/or carers;
- **equal opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The **learning and development** requirements cover:

- the areas of learning and development which must shape activities and experiences (educational programmes) for children in Early Years settings;
- the early learning goals that providers must help children work towards (the knowledge, skills and understanding children should have at the end of the academic year in which they turn five) and;
- assessment arrangements for measuring progress (and requirements for reporting to parents and/or carers)

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS at Heathcote, we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- recognising that all children are unique and special
- understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates
- providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know they are valued by staff looking after them
- fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community
- teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways
- encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes
- developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously
- supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ from their own
- understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development
- providing learning experiences which reflect children's interests to encourage and develop their natural desire, excitement and motivation to learn
- providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development providing effective learning opportunities in the whole environment, both inside and outside

The themes and commitments laid out in the Statutory Framework For the Early Years Foundation Stage, re-published in September 2023, underpin all future learning for supporting, fostering, promoting and developing:

- personal, social and emotional well-being;
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
- social skills;
- attention skills and persistence;
- language and communication;
- reading and writing;
- problem solving, reasoning and numeracy;
- knowledge and understanding of the world;
- physical development;
- creative development

Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery, we acknowledge and believe that play is the most important part in the network of learning and that this should be cross-curricular. The aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage are achieved through planned, purposeful play with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. We encourage children to:

- think creatively and work collaboratively

- explore and develop their own learning experiences
- practise and develop their skills, ideas and critical thinking
- learn how to take measured risks and challenge themselves
- learn to understand the need for rules and take responsibility for one's own actions
- communicate their ideas
- investigate and problem solve
- be willing to 'have a go'

Teaching and Learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery, we believe that a stimulating, multi-sensory and interactive learning environment is essential. Teachers aim to create a variety of enabling learning areas within their classroom in which children are encouraged to initiate and extend their own learning and learn from each other. Learning areas are established both indoors and outdoors and teaching is always adapted to suit the needs of the individual child. While children participate in focused whole class and small group sessions, they are encouraged to take this learning and apply it independently in a free-flowing, cross-curricular environment.

Emphasis is placed on open lines of communication between home and school to promote effective learning. Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's learning and are kept informed as to current topics and learning priorities for their child.

The four overarching principles of the EYFS set the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. At Heathcote Preparatory School and Nursery, practitioners use the principles of the EYFS to guide everyday teaching and learning: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development. These principles run alongside the government's Every Child Matters outcomes: Staying Safe, Being Healthy, Enjoying and Achieving, Making a Positive Contribution, Achieving Economic Well-being.

The teaching and learning is guided by the Early Years Foundation Stage seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

There are four specific areas of learning and development, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy

- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Through teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage, we aim:

- To provide children with opportunities to initiate their own learning and to learn from each other
- To encourage children to develop positive dispositions towards their learning
- To allow children time to consolidate their learning
- To provide a safe, stimulating and comfortable learning environment
- For children to develop a positive self-image
- For children to learn through movement and use of all the senses
- For children to make links in their learning
- To promote the development and use of language
- To ensure that play is progressive and matches children's level of development and interest
- For practitioners to use their expertise to gauge when it is appropriate to teach skills and knowledge directly
- For practitioners to model a range of positive behaviour and promote rich language experiences
- To plan the indoor and outdoor learning environment in a manner appropriate to their level and which encourages purposeful play
- To work with parents in partnership and recognise their continued role in their child's development
- To undertake skilful and well-planned observations to assess children's development and progress

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Early Years curriculum in Nursery and Reception meets the requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage published on 31st March 2021. Curriculum planning focuses on the early learning goals, which includes seven prime and specific areas of learning and development:

Prime areas

Communication and language development involves giving children 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

See Appendix 1

Physical development involves providing varied and repeated opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and

movement. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being whilst fine motor control helps with hand-eye co-ordination. Opportunities for experiences of play inside and outdoors should be provided.

See Appendix 2

Personal, social and emotional development involves helping children 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 understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of healthy activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food

See Appendix 3

Specific areas

Literacy development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest

See Appendix 4

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures

See Appendix 5

Understanding the world involves guiding children 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

See Appendix 6

Expressive arts and design involves enabling children to explore and play with a 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

See Appendix 7

Each area of learning shows progression through a sequence of Stepping Stones which lead to Early Learning Goals. Early Learning Goals establish expectations for children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage (see Appendices 1 to 7). Children explore the Early Learning

Goals through play-based activities, which can take the form of adult-focussed sessions, adult-initiated sessions or child-initiated activities. Children are exposed to a range of learning experiences and are able to access the curriculum both indoors and outdoors.

The curriculum takes into account the specific needs of individuals and the class as a whole. Lessons may be taught as a whole class or in small groups and one-to-one support is provided where necessary. Much of the curriculum is delivered through free-flow carousel activities in which children have the opportunity to independently practise and further develop and explore their knowledge and skills. Learning areas and activities are designed to encourage child initiated play and learning with adults observing and facilitating where necessary.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning throughout the school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents and/or carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

In planning and guiding children's activities, teachers reflect on the different ways that children learn. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS 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
- creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The curriculum is planned in phases based upon continual assessments of the children's differing needs and experiences. A Long Term Plan guides our Medium Term and Short Term plans. The Long Term Plan ensures that all seven areas of learning and development are given equal emphasis and that all aspects of learning within the seven areas are covered regularly and frequently. Medium Term plans are devised by the class teacher using the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. These plans are used as the basis for teachers' short term planning. The short term planning is recorded using daily plans and continual provision planners. Planning encompasses a range of child-initiated, adult-initiated and adult-led tasks both indoors and outdoors. Ongoing observational assessments are used to inform planning for each child's continuing development through play-based activities.

On entry to Reception, all children are carefully assessed through observation, in order to ascertain stages of development, strengths and needs. Further assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of regular observation, undertaken by the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded on the school's EY tracking system Tapestry. Photographic evidence of children's learning experiences are supplemented by feedback from parents and/or carers.

We use Tapestry to record ongoing judgements against the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. Each child's level of development in the seven prime and specific areas of learning and development is recorded against assessment criteria known as Early Learning Goals.

Within the final term of the Foundation Stage, we provide a written summary to parents and/or carers, reporting children's progress against the Early Learning Goals. At the end of the Foundation Stage, the individual Early Years Foundation Stage profiles inform planning in Year 1, in order to support and extend pupils' learning at the start of Key Stage 1. In some cases, there is the need to track forward in the Foundation Stage to the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 in order to extend pupils who have progressed beyond the requirements of the Early Learning Goals.

Safeguarding

We take all necessary steps to ensure that our children are safe and well as we recognise that children who are healthy, safe and secure in the broadest sense have the best chance at fulfilling their potential in all areas, both at home and at school. In line with statutory regulations, and following best practice, we adhere to our school's Safeguarding Policy.

Child Protection

Nadine Solsberg, Bursar, has lead responsibility for safeguarding. Staff members receive regular training to maintain their required level of child protection certification and are aware that they are required to be constantly vigilant in identifying and reporting any concerns they may have regarding a child's safety. We are aware of our duty to report any allegations against staff members or persons working on the premises to Ofsted within 14 days of the allegations being made. Please see our school's Safeguarding policy and EYFS Mobile Phones/cameras policy for additional information.

Suitable People

We are committed to employing well-qualified and committed staff who are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their roles. We obtain enhanced criminal record checks and barred list checks for all people who work directly with children in an unsupervised capacity and all staff members who work on our premises whilst the children are on site. We maintain records of staff qualification and identity checks as well as the vetting process they have completed. We maintain robust recruitment procedures for all EYFS staff members and do not allow unsupervised contact by staff members whose suitability has not yet been verified. Staff are aware that they must disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands or warnings which affect their suitability to work with children. Please see our Safer Recruitment and Safeguarding policies for additional information.

Staff medication

We are aware that practitioners must not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect their ability to care for children. If practitioners are taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, they must seek medical advice and we ensure that those practitioners only work directly with children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair that staff member's ability to look after children properly. All staff medication is securely stored and out of the children's reach at all times.

Staff qualification, training, support and skills

New members of staff have a thorough Induction Procedure with the Bursar. We are committed to providing appropriate training and professional development to all members of staff. In line with statutory regulations, line managers hold regular meetings with EYFS staff

who have contact with children and families. Supervision meetings are focused on discussing ideas, identifying solutions to address issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

We have members of staff who have completed approved paediatric first aid training courses. One first aider is always on site and one accompanies children on each outing.

Staff to child ratio

At Heathcote we ensure that there are always sufficient staff to give the children the care and attention they need and that the staff to pupil ratio according to the EYFS Statutory Framework is met.

Staffing ratios are set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory (EYFS) framework (see pages 19-21).

- There must always be two adults working with the children:
- The leader will either be a level 3 or a level 6 and
- 50% of the rest of the staff must be qualified to level 2.
- 3 and 4 year olds must have a 1:8 adult : child ratio
- 2 year olds must have a 1:5 in all sectors (rising 3's in a school nursery can count as a 3 year old as above)
- Where a provision has a graduate lead (level 6 or higher) they can work to a 1:13 ratio.

This staff to child ratio is maintained, but during break times and lunchtimes the key person does not necessarily have to be required but staff supervising are adequately qualified. The Headteacher uses her professional judgement in determining what cover is required. The safety of the children is always the first priority and the key person is always in the vicinity and readily available if needed.

In EYFS, staff complete risk assessments for trips to determine the staff to child ratio. However, the minimum requirement at Heathcote is: at least one member of staff with a current paediatric first aid certificate must attend trips, 1: 4 ratio must be maximum number of EYFS pupils to adults for a school trip.

Monitoring and review

The Pre-Prep Leads (Mrs O'Brien and Mrs Perrett) to regularly monitor EYFS practice and provision.

The Senior Leadership Team monitor the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Early Learning Goals

Appendix 1 Communication and Language

Listening, Attention and Understanding

Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. They give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, while engaged in another activity. Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Speaking

They are confident to speak in a small group, class and one to one discussion offering their own ideas, using recently introduced vocabulary. Children express their ideas and feelings effectively using full sentences, showing awareness of listeners' needs. They use past present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.

Appendix 2 Physical Development

Gross Motor Skills

Children show good control and co-ordination in large and small movements. They move confidently in a range of ways, safely negotiating space. Move energetically such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing.

Fine Motor skills

Children can handle equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing. They can use a range of small tools, including scissors, paint brushes and cutlery.

Appendix 3 Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Managing self

Children are confident to try new activities, and show independence, resilience and perseverance when challenging. They can follow simple rules and explain the reasons for rules, displays understanding of right from wrong. Children can manage their own basic

hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, toileting and understanding healthy food choices.

Self-Regulation

Children talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They work as part of a group or class. They adjust their behaviour to different situations, and take changes of routine in their stride. Working towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses.

Building relationships

Children work and play co-operatively, taking turns with others. They take account of one another's ideas about how to organise their activity. They show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships with adults and peers.

Appendix 4 Literacy

Comprehension

By retelling stories and narratives, the children demonstrate their understanding about what they have heard and read, using their own and newly introduced vocabulary. They start to anticipate and provide appropriate, alternatives to key events in stories. Children use and understand new words during discussions about stories, poems, non-fiction and role-play.

Word Reading

The children can say a sound for every alphabet letters and at least 10 digraphs. Children read aloud and understand simple sentences, they use phonic knowledge to decode regular words through sound-blending as well as recognising some common exception words.

Writing

Children write recognisable letters forming them correctly. Starting to identify sounds in words in order to spell them when writing simple phrases and sentences which can be read by others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible.

Appendix 5 Mathematics

Number

Children have a deep understanding of number up to 10. Automatically recall (without rhymes or counting aids) number bonds up to 5 and some bonds up to 10, including doubling facts. Children can subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5.

Numerical Patterns

Verbally count beyond 20, spotting the pattern of the counting system. Children compare quantities (up to 10) and recognise which one is greater, less than or the same. They recognise, create and describe patterns within numbers up to 10 including odds, evens, doubling facts and sharing quantities equally.

Appendix 6 Understanding the World

People, culture and communities

Use knowledge from observation, discussion and texts to describe their own immediate environment. Children know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions in this country as well as other countries. They know that other children don't always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this.

The Natural World

Children know about similarities and differences in relation to the natural world (including places, objects, materials and living things) around them and contrasting environments. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes, understanding important processes -seasons, changing states of matter.

Past and Present

Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members and other roles within society. They understand some similarities and differences of things from the past and present using their knowledge from experiences from home and at school.

Appendix 7 Expressive Arts and Design

Creating with materials

Children safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design texture, form and function. Confidently share what and how they have

made their creations. Depict characters in stories during role play using numerous props and materials.

Being imaginative and expressive

Children sing songs, make music and dance, and experiment with ways of changing them, attempting to stay in time with the music. Able to sing independently a range of well-known songs and nursery rhymes. Children recount, invent and adapt familiar stories with peers and familiar adults.