



Homer First School and Nursery

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

The Curriculum

The Nursery and Foundation Stage follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework which is available to download at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected but three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DFE 2014: 1.3), they support children's learning in all other areas, they are known as prime areas.

The prime areas are;

- **Communication and Language**-Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development**-Moving and Handling and Self Care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**-Making relationships, Managing feelings and behaviour and Self Confidence and Self awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The specific areas are;

Literacy-Reading and Writing

Mathematics-Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures

Understanding the World-People and Communities, The World and Technology

Expressive Arts and Design-Exploring and using media and materials and Being Imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The EYFS staff plan activities within the classrooms 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.

Creating and Thinking Critically-children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Development Matters

We use Development Matters which sets out the pathways for children's development in broad ages in the Prime and Specific areas. We use this to help assess each child's level of development and we make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next. Further information about Development Matters and how this is used in EYFS can be downloaded at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2/development-matters>

Teaching Strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities across the day. Although much of the time is spent with children self selecting tasks, the interaction between the adult and child is essential as the adult's response to the child builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or game with them, at other times they will participate in a child's game, extending it where possible.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classrooms. We believe children learn best from activities and experience that interest and inspire them. Using children's interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They 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 experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play, which is controlled and adult led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned adult led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and take on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our topic work, maths, literacy, phonics and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning, learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer, sitting still etc.

Reading and story play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times.

Planning

We believe many children need to be given a starting point to learn new things and find topics are a great way to fire the imagination. Staff plan on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions to inform where the learning journey should move to.

Our staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Staff also take into account 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. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all areas of learning. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas.

Assessment, observations and online Learning Journeys

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of the children in the EYFS. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies all of which come together in their online Learning Journey on Evidence Me. We are very proud of our online Learning Journeys; these are collections of children's work and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Staff will provide details of observations and work using Evidence Me. The observations will include details of the learning observed, links to the Characteristics and Prime and, or Specific areas of learning using [Development Matters](#). Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning in the observation. Observations are emailed to Parents/Carers weekly. We actively encourage Parents/Carers to contribute to their child's Learning Journey by emailing observations of their child (via Evidence Me).

Reception Baseline Assessment

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a statutory assessment. It provides a snapshot of where pupils are when they arrive at school. It will provide a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils between reception and the end of primary school. It will be completed within the first 6 weeks of a child starting reception.

What will be assessed?

The RBA will be an activity-based assessment of pupils' starting points in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

The RBA will be a short task-based assessment. Pupils will use practical resources to complete these tasks with their class teachers and they will record the results on a laptop, computer or tablet. It will not be used to label or track individual pupils. The assessments will take place within the first 6 weeks of the pupils starting school. Following the assessment teachers will receive a series of short, narrative statements that identify each pupil's starting point this will be used to inform teaching within the first term. Further information about the Reception Baseline Assessment can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/reception-baseline-assessment>

Early Learning Goals (ELG)

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet meeting the expected levels

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

Role of staff and key worker

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Their role is to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in enabling children's well-being now and their future successes.

There are rare occasions when significant adults cannot be in the class and we aim to be consistent in who covers these absences.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at any time.

When a child gains a place at Homer First School and Nursery we ask them to attend sessions at the school alongside other children who will be starting. We give each family an 'All About Me' booklet to complete with their child over the summer. We aim to complete a home visit for each child prior to them starting. We have a staggered entry. Early in the first term parents are invited to a parents' meeting so their child's settling in can be reviewed.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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 safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence. We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff: child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

It is important to note that members of staff do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices in the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs with their personal handsets. Members of staff do, however, use school iPads to take photographs or record videos as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's online learning journeys, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs.

We are a healthy school and our children receive free fruit and milk from a government scheme and we also ask that parents provide a healthy snack for the morning on a daily basis. We have a rolling snack for part of the morning and the children can help themselves to their snack and other snacks and milk provided.

We take all accidents seriously and always log and phone home immediately if a child is seriously hurt.

We encourage all children to start school without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. We acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents' (i.e wet themselves) and have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it. We ask that all parents provide a spare change of clothes for their child which can be kept on their individual peg. We ask parents to keep our stocks of clothes high by returning anything their child has borrowed. Children are changed in the open area outside the toilets.

All large climbing equipment is checked by our site officer and fire alarms are held regularly in line with whole school policy. Staff in EYFS complete a check of the outdoor area daily. There is an annual external check of equipment.

We follow whole school procedures for child protection (see separate policy).

We have separate policies for medicine in school and off-site visits.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Headteacher every 2 years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.