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

At Homer First School and Nursery, our Early Years curriculum is based on the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework**. The curriculum is designed to provide children with a broad, balanced and ambitious foundation for future learning, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to succeed.

The EYFS curriculum is delivered through a combination of planned, purposeful play, high-quality adult interactions, carefully designed learning environments and direct teaching where appropriate. Practitioners respond to children's interests and individual needs, ensuring learning is engaging, meaningful and builds on prior knowledge and experiences.

The EYFS framework identifies **seven areas of learning and development**, all of which are important and interconnected. Three of these are known as the **Prime Areas**, which are particularly important in supporting children's learning, development and readiness for future learning.

Prime Areas

- **Communication and Language**
  - Listening, Attention and Understanding
  - Speaking
- **Physical Development**
  - Gross Motor Skills
  - Fine Motor Skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

    - Self-Regulation
    - Managing Self
    - Building Relationships
    -

The remaining four areas are known as the **Specific Areas**. These build upon the Prime Areas and provide children with the knowledge and skills they need to participate successfully in society.

Specific Areas

- **Literacy**
    - Comprehension
    - Word Reading
    - Writing
- **Mathematics**
    - Number
    - Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World**
    - Past and Present
    - People, Culture and Communities
    - The Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design**
    - Creating with Materials
    - Being Imaginative and Expressive

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

The EYFS also identifies the **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**. These characteristics underpin our curriculum and are promoted through high-quality interactions, engaging learning experiences and opportunities for children to explore, investigate and develop independence.

The three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and are willing to 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate, keep trying when they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for solving problems and completing tasks.

Further information about the EYFS Statutory Framework can be found on the GOV.UK website.

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

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 took 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 across all areas of learning. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day.

We promote natural, clutter-free environments that are calm, purposeful and support high-quality learning experiences. Resources are carefully selected and organised to avoid overstimulation and to encourage children to focus, explore and engage deeply in their play.

The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom, with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We ensure that the range of activities outdoors reflects all areas of the curriculum, providing continuous opportunities for learning in both structured and child-initiated play.

Assessment, observations and online Learning Journeys

Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is an ongoing process that is based on practitioners' professional knowledge of each child. Staff use their daily interactions, observations and conversations with children to understand their interests, strengths, progress and next steps in learning. This enables learning experiences to be planned that build on what children know and can do.

To support this process, we use **Evidence Me** to create each child's online Learning Journey. These Learning Journeys celebrate children's experiences, achievements and progress through a collection of photographs, observations and examples of their learning. They provide a meaningful record of each child's development and are used alongside practitioners' professional judgement to inform planning and assessment.

Observations may identify significant learning, demonstrate progress over time or celebrate important achievements. Where appropriate, practitioners will identify possible next steps to support children's continued development. Observations may make reference to the EYFS areas of learning and development to support assessment; however, practitioners recognise that not every experience or observation needs to be recorded or linked to a specific statement.

Parents and carers are valued partners in their child's learning. Observations recorded on Evidence Me are shared weekly with families, and parents/carers are actively encouraged to contribute their own observations and achievements from home. These contributions help to build a holistic picture of each child's development and strengthen the partnership between home and school.

Assessment information gathered through observations, interactions and parental contributions is used to monitor children's progress, identify any additional support that may be needed and ensure all children are supported to make good progress across the EYFS curriculum.

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

All children in Reception will complete the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of starting school.

The RBA is a short, age-appropriate assessment that provides a snapshot of each child's starting point when they begin Reception. It assesses early development in:

- Literacy, communication and language
- Mathematics

The assessment is carried out on a one-to-one basis by a trained member of staff and consists of a series of practical, interactive activities. Children respond verbally, by interacting with a touchscreen device and, for some mathematics questions, by using practical resources. The assessment is designed to be informal and child-friendly and is not intended to feel like a test.

The purpose of the RBA is to provide a national starting point for measuring the progress schools support pupils to make from Reception to the end of Key Stage 2. It is not used to label or track individual children.

Following the assessment, teachers receive narrative statements describing each child's performance. These statements are considered alongside practitioners' ongoing observations, professional judgement and formative assessment to support planning and ensure learning experiences meet the needs of each child.

Further information about the Reception Baseline Assessment can be found on the GOV.UK website: 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 outcomes of the EYFS Profile are shared with parents and carers at the end of the Reception year through the child's end-of-year school report.

Assessment judgements are quality assured through internal moderation and, where appropriate, moderation with other schools and the local authority to ensure consistency and accuracy. Practitioners use the EYFS Statutory Framework, the EYFS Profile Handbook and their professional judgement to make secure assessment decisions.

EYFS Profile data is submitted to the local authority in accordance with statutory requirements.

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 and transitions

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first educators. We value the importance of working in close partnership with families to ensure every child has the best possible start to their education. We encourage open communication and work collaboratively with parents and carers to share information about children's learning, development and wellbeing throughout their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

To support a positive transition into Reception, children and their families are invited to attend 'Stay and Play' sessions, giving them the opportunity to become familiar with the school environment, staff and other children who will be joining their class. Children also attend a transition session independently to help build confidence and prepare them for starting school.

Before starting school, each family is provided with an 'All About Me' booklet to complete together. This enables staff to gain an understanding of each child's interests, strengths, experiences and individual needs. Families are also invited to complete a summer transition activity to support children's excitement and readiness for school.

Where possible, practitioners will visit children in their current early years setting to gather information about their learning and development and support continuity of provision. We also aim to carry out a home visit, or an alternative

introductory meeting where this is not possible, to establish positive relationships with families and gain a deeper understanding of each child's individual needs.

This partnership enables us to ensure children experience a smooth and successful transition into school and that learning builds on their prior experiences.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

At Homer First School and Nursery, we recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure and valued. We are committed to providing a welcoming, inclusive and stimulating environment where every child can thrive. We implement the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework and follow the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

We ensure that statutory staff-to-child ratios are maintained at all times to meet children's individual needs and promote their safety and wellbeing. Several members of staff hold a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification and a qualified first aider is always available whenever children are on the premises or attending off-site visits.

Staff follow the school's policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, first aid, administration of medicines, health and safety, intimate care, educational visits and mobile phone use. Personal mobile phones are not used within the Early Years setting, and staff do not take photographs using personal devices. School-owned devices are used to capture observations of children's learning in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and parental consent.

Further information can be found in the school's **Safeguarding** and **Child Protection Policy** and other related policies.

Accidents and First Aid

We take all accidents and injuries seriously and ensure that appropriate first aid is administered by a trained member of staff.

All accidents requiring first aid are recorded on the school's First Aid Forms app. Parents and carers will receive a notification via email if their child has an accident requiring first aid.

In the event of a head injury or a more serious accident, parents and carers will also be contacted by telephone as soon as possible. Where emergency medical treatment is required, the school will contact the emergency services immediately and inform parents and carers without delay.

Intimate Care

At Homer First School and Nursery, we are committed to ensuring that all children's intimate care needs are met with dignity, respect and sensitivity. We recognise that some children may require support with toileting, nappy changing or personal care, either routinely or occasionally, and we work closely with parents and carers to ensure these needs are met in a safe, respectful and consistent manner.

Intimate care is carried out by appropriately trained members of staff in line with safeguarding, health and safety and hygiene procedures. Children's privacy, dignity and individual needs are always respected, and, where appropriate, individual intimate care plans are developed in partnership with parents, carers and relevant professionals.

Parents and carers are asked to provide the necessary resources, such as spare clothing, nappies and wipes where required. All intimate care procedures are recorded and communicated with parents in accordance with the school's **Intimate Care Policy**.

Health and Safety

The safety and wellbeing of our children is of paramount importance. We provide a safe, secure and well-maintained learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, to enable children to learn and play confidently.

Staff carry out a daily safety check of the Early Years outdoor learning environment before it is used by children, ensuring that equipment and resources are safe and any potential hazards are identified and addressed promptly. All large climbing equipment is inspected regularly by the school's Site Officer as part of ongoing maintenance procedures. In addition, all outdoor play equipment receives an annual inspection by a qualified external contractor to ensure it continues to meet the required safety standards.

Fire drills are carried out regularly in line with the school's Health and Safety and Fire Safety procedures, ensuring that children and staff are familiar with emergency evacuation routines.

Any health and safety concerns are reported promptly and addressed in accordance with the school's Health and Safety Policy.

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.