Hill Farm

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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Aims

At Hill Farm Primary School, we aim to provide every child with the skills and values to become a happy, independent, and curious life-long learner. Our priority is that our provision provides a high level of engagement and active learning through a range of skill-based activities. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023) and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

• 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 carers
• **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:
• Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning
• Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
• Work in partnership with parents/carers and within the wider context
• Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
• Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and supported by the adult
• Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (publishing.service.gov.uk) (2023).

Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Hill Farm Primary School is for children aged three to five years, which are children in Nursery and Reception. Children are admitted into Hill Farm Nursery in the term following their third birthday. There are 29 Nursery places and children can attend on a full-time (30 hours) basis or on a part-time basis for three hours per day either in the morning or afternoon. There is one full-time teacher and one full-time nursery nurse. The Nursery facilities consist of a classroom and outdoor area.

Pupils are admitted into Hill Farm Reception in the September following their fourth birthday. There are sixty places (two classes) in Reception. There is a minimum of one teacher and one teaching assistant for each class. The Reception Unit consists of three open plan classrooms and a shared outdoor area.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the statutory framework of the EYFS. We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:
• Communication and language
• Physical development
• Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:
• Literacy (Reading and Writing)
• Mathematics (Number and Shape and Space)
• Understanding the world
• Expressive arts and design

The teaching in the EYFS also encourages three characteristics of effective learning which underpin the learning and development in all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

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 critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Our EYFS Curriculum:
• is at the heart of our learning journey approach
• is distinctive, innovative and strategically planned
• is reviewed in the light of national developments, new thinking and research and development
• introduces challenging, engaging and real-life problems
• strives to encourage and develop a love of learning
• enables learning to happen within a child centred approach
• ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning at every stage of development
• ensures resources and apparatus are available to support learning in every area of the EYFS curriculum
• ensures all areas of learning are regarded with the same level of importance and are interlinked in learning
• includes fundamental British values to teach children a sense of self and belonging; enabling them to learn and stay true to the values that make people good human beings
• ensures that children learn to live together peacefully, with each of them playing a valuable role in the multi-cultural world in which they live

Planning

We use the development statements in *Development Matters* (2023) Development Matters – Non statutory curriculum guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage (publishing.service.gov.uk) and *Birth to 5 Matters* – Non Statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage to inform our curriculum design and identify next steps for each child to deepen, challenge and extend their learning. Planning is based on children's interests and activities allow for 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' to be demonstrated and embedded. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. Planning takes into account children with individual needs in line with the Inclusion policy. 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.

Teaching

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Activities based on skills may be led by adult facilitators and these activities let learning happen through creative opportunities, a supportive environment and a sound pedagogical understanding. Appropriate resources in the environment are stimulating and relevant. The resources are provided to create rich learning opportunities through a range of highly structured, adult-led, child-led or child-initiated learning.

A whole class theme is linked to activities within the EYFS setting. These are adapted continuously to meet the needs of the unique child. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves through self-selecting activities. The activities offer opportunities for extended learning and are structured to develop their learning. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session (Read Write Inc), teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is a fundamental part of learning and development at Hill Farm Primary School. Staff observe children to understand their interests, learning styles, and achievements. Observations guide our planning and help us create environments and strategies to extend and enrich learning. We focus on fostering children's interests to maintain high engagement.

Termly summative assessments are made to evaluate each child's progress across the seven areas of learning. To support our judgements, we use an assessment document developed by Castle Phoenix Trust specifically for the Early Years Foundation Stage. This document is designed as a best-fit tool to indicate which children are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goals by agreed dates within Castle Phoenix Trust. It is important to note that this assessment document neither constitutes a comprehensive progression of skills nor serves as a replacement for the curriculum; rather, it is intended to support consistent and reliable assessment judgments.

For children progressing from our Nursery, assessment data is passed on to Reception to ensure continuity of learning. New children undergo baseline assessments within their first few weeks to identify individual starting points. Within the first six weeks of a child starting Reception, staff will carry out the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

We maintain the reliability of our assessments through:

- Deep knowledge of each child gained through observation and interaction
- Creating environments that allow each child to thrive
- Including input from parents and other relevant adults
- Moderation within the EYFS team
- Moderation with schools within the trust, Year 1 teachers, and the wider school network (Elements)

At the end of EYFS, staff complete a profile for each child assessing their progress against 17 Early Learning Goals. Children are classified as:

- Meeting expected levels
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents/carers, and results are shared with families.

Working with parents and carers

We recognise that children learn best when there is strong collaboration between practitioners and parents/carers. Parents are invited to be involved throughout their child's educational journey, beginning with home visits and transition sessions in the Autumn term. We meet with parents regularly to discuss individual needs and run workshops each half term, providing informal opportunities for dialogue. Feedback from parents informs our assessments throughout the year. Parents are also invited to assemblies and events, such as Nativity performances and Easter bonnet parades.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. Nursery and Reception parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with their child's teacher twice a year in a formal parent meeting and receive a written report on their child's achievements at the end of the Summer Term. Parents and carers of Reception children also receive a report on their child's Early Learning Goal achievements at the end of the Summer Term.

Each child is assigned to a class and their class teacher helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The class teacher supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The class teacher also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Inclusion

We value all children as individuals at Hill Farm, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the policy lead and chair of governors on an annual basis. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.