

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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1. Purpose and Aims

In the Nursery and Reception classes the children are cared for and provided with a stimulating and challenging environment to try to give them the best possible start to their career at Hampstead Hill School. In partnership with the family and carers we enable them to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We provide opportunities for indoor and outdoor learning which enriches understanding and inspires awe and wonder of the world.

This policy links with the [Every Child Matters](#) agenda, in that every child has a right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

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.

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2023 Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Statutory Framework](#) and [Independent School Standards](#).

2. Introduction

At HHS, we are exempt from the Early Years Learning and Development requirements for children over the age of three. In our school children can join us anytime from the age of two. Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday. Reception Year is acknowledged as the start of primary school.

Key Stage 1 curriculum begins for our children at the start of Reception. Our advanced and bespoke curriculum is complemented by the Early Learning Goals.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment
- It enables children to make an effective transition from home to school

3. Structure of the EYFS

In the EYFS, there are three Year Groups and each Year Group consists of four classes. The Lower School, based in St Stephen's Hall and the Garden classrooms, is made up of Early Years (age 2–3), Pre-Reception (age 3–4).

The EYFS offers education from 7.45am – 5.30pm Monday to Friday, 51 Weeks per year. Families can collect their children at different times throughout the afternoon:

7.45am – 12.15pm

7.45am – 2.15pm

7.45am – 3.45pm

7.45am – 4.30pm

7.45am – 5.30pm

Please visit the [School's Admissions page](#) for respective fees.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2023 EYFS statutory framework.

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
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

When the children reach Pre-Reception, emphasis is placed on early reading. This is co-ordinated by the School's Reading Team.

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

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.

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Our medium-term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and for those more able children working towards Levels 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum. The weekly short-term planning consists of skills sheets for the six areas of learning with focussed tasks and assessments.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, in Reception the balance shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

4.3 Supervision to Support Practice with Key Children

According to the EYFS Framework, each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

Effective supervision will ensure that practitioners are supported to make choices that are in the best interest of the children and their families, managed in accordance with HHS policies & procedures and that all decisions are fully recorded and where applicable added to children's records, learning progress and assessments. Where key decisions are reached through informal supervision, they should also be recorded. Supervision also aims to ensure best use of resources.

The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

5. EYFS Principles

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following four guided themes, which are broken down into four commitments describing how the commitments can be put into practice.

- 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

6. Teaching and Learning Style

Our Curriculum Policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. It includes whole class teaching, working with small groups or individuals and on-going observations.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents, 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; we start from the child and his/her needs and plan the learning linked to our assessments and observations.
- 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; we believe that children learn through active, hands-on experiences both in and outside of the classroom.
- The development of outdoor space where children can engage in our conservation curriculum and take part in forest-school style activities. The natural resources and willow castle in our meadow area provide a stimulating environment for imaginative play.

- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- 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.
- Involvement of parents with the curriculum through parental talks/visits and the opportunity for them to contribute to their child's Tapestry profile. Parents are encouraged to talk about their cultural experiences and share their knowledge of a range of festivities throughout the year.
- The encouragement of children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management. This has been developed with the introduction of mindfulness and P4C strategies encouraging self-expression and independent thinking.
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.
- Introduction of ICT skills in Early Years classes through use of child computers/equipment, online safety talks and use of Teacher iPads and laptops. From Pre-Reception upwards, children can learn through interactive handwriting and phonics programmes and teachers can use stimuli as hooks for the lesson. Children are introduced to writing on the IWB, moving images and exploring 2D/3D shapes. They also follow exercise classes and are inspired by a range of P4C prompts to facilitate independent thinking and reasoning.
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through 'Assessment for Learning' of children through a record of observations on Tapestry, which is shared with parents. Parents can also contribute to the learning journal and share special milestones of their child's development.
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.
- The clear aims and success criteria for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate our planning and improve what we do including fortnightly lower school meetings for each year group.
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage using the Performance Management system to inform this.

7. Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to self-regulate and understand the need for rules. Children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and supported environment. Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation stage curriculum.

The children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. The children are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. They learn through being active learners working with a wide range of resources. Through play children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes.

8. Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning (see our policy on school inclusion).

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage.

Some children progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children
- The school employs a full time SENDco to ensure that pupils needing extra help receive the support that they need to cope with identified additional needs

9. Assessment

At Hampstead Hill School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

When a child is aged between two and three, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the three prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is ongoing and is an integral part of the learning and development process. The staff make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Staff use an online platform called 'Tapestry' to document observations and share them with parents and carers. The observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities and plan the next stages in the learning experiences for the child.

Please note, due to our exemption, we are no longer required to complete the EYFS profile at the end of Reception Year. We will use our personalised methods of assessment.

Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in July and send them to parents in early July each year. Targets are set for the transfer to Year 1 and are shared with both new staff and parents.

10. The Role of Parents

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. Parents are made to feel welcome and valued in their dealings with all members of staff. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school
- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Nursery and Reception classes
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. If needed a meeting will be set up between the staff and parent/carer so that any issues can be resolved quickly. There is a formal meeting for parents in the Spring term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances
- Arranging for children to start school over the first three weeks of term. We stagger the starting time of each child over this period, so that the teacher can welcome each child individually into our school. We encourage parents to stay if there are problems with the child's admission
- Offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents. There is regular communication with home through the child's Reading Record diary
- Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

11. Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. As we strive to become London's leading eco school, we try to use natural, biodegradable resources as far as possible. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

12. Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Hampstead Hill, 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 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. Transitions are also carefully planned to assist and enable pupils to smoothly progress to the next stage of their learning.

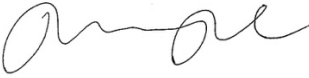

13. Food and Drink

All children are provided with a School lunch and this is included within the termly fees - children are not allowed to bring a packed lunch. Hampstead Hill School gained 'National Healthy School Status' several years ago. All our lunches and snacks are prepared and/or cooked on site and wherever possible we use fresh, locally sourced produce. Any frozen and packaged foods contain 'no' added salt and/or sugar and are preservative and additive free. All fresh meat, fruit and vegetable produce is delivered daily and all 'meat alternative' products are Soya based protein and egg free. Our menu was

designed with the help of a well-respected nutritionist. Further the children are provided with a morning and afternoon snack. Children have free access to water throughout the day – within each classroom the children drink from individual cups topped up by members of staff.

14. Links to Other Policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Pastoral Care Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Supervision Policy
- Assessment Policy

Dates Reviewed	November 2023
Next Review	September 2024
Name	 Ross Montague Headteacher  Sian Hoskins School Administrator