



Early Years Policy

Key Document Details

School Name: Haydon Wick Primary School

Version no: 1

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Approved by: Principal

Ratified date: December 2019

Interim review date: n/a

Next review date: December 2021

Overview

We endeavour to give a very warm welcome to every child that joins our Early Years team and include them in our busy and friendly atmosphere, where lots of learning and fun takes place.

Aims

At Haydon Wick Primary School, we are committed to meeting every child's individual needs. We ensure that the child's welfare is paramount and that they develop as young learners in a safe environment.

We provide a range of opportunities for children to develop and engage through first hand experiences, hands on learning and play opportunities. We encourage children to participate in a variety of activities some are focused and led by an adult and others are provided to give the child a chance to be active and an independent learner. We believe this approach helps to build children's self-esteem and self-worth and increases independence and the ability to show initiative.

We strive to engage children in their learning through our creative and vibrant environments, which encourage the use of both indoor and outdoor space. We encourage a strong partnership between home and school.

Our ethos promotes children's all round development and fosters positive attitudes towards learning. Inviting children to develop positive values, attitudes and relationships. This is supported throughout the school through our values based approach.

Play and Active Learning

We believe that children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development

At Haydon Wick we believe play to be the means through which young children learn. It is through play that children have the opportunity to explore, develop and act out experiences, helping them make sense of the world. Play helps children build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children investigate and solve problems through collaborative and individual play.

Play opportunities are available in our FS2 classrooms both indoors and outdoors, where the three prime areas and four specific areas of learning are offered.

We see ourselves as part of the community and enjoy local visits. We try to invite local people into school for discussions.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Planning

The planning within the Foundation Stage at Haydon Wick follows the schools' long term curriculum overview. The weekly plans take on these themes and are also supported by the observations carried out of the children from the previous week. This enables children's interests, achievements and next steps to be addressed.

We teach carefully planned topics throughout the year to ensure that every child is given a variety of different stimuli. The themes are also supported by the child's interests; this helps to keep the children engaged and allows them to take ownership of their learning.

The children receive an educational diet that is broad, balanced and rich. We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and use these documents to support this. They are Development Matters and Early Years Outcomes.

Using the above and practitioner knowledge, teachers are able to incorporate the seven areas of learning into a stimulating, creative and inter-connected approach.

The children are actively engaged in working towards the Early Learning Goals. The goals are made up of three prime areas and four specific areas of learning, there are 17 in total.

Prime Areas

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas are broken down into individual aspects which eventually lead towards the Early Learning Goal for each area of learning. To achieve these goals, the children work through month bands which are appropriate to their developmental stage. Alongside this, run the Characteristics of Effective Learning. These move through the 17 areas.

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

The four themes of the EYFS underpin all the guidance. The document – Development Matters shows how these themes and the principles that inform them, work together for children in the EYFS. They are; a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environment and equal learning and development. These guiding principles shape our practice in our early years settings.

These areas cannot be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on one another. These areas are explored through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities.

The child initiated opportunities provided, give the chances for the children to be independent learners, we may have modelled or joined in the play before and are on hand to scaffold during. The adult led activities are introducing and teaching new skills. Activities and role play opportunities inside and outdoors provide a means through which children can independently practice, apply and develop the skills and ideas with the support of the adults in the setting. At Haydon Wick we recognise that phonics knowledge is key to reading and writing. We carry out discrete phonics sessions, linked to the letters and sounds document. The children then apply their phonics skills each day in and around the environment. We practice speaking and listening throughout the day though circle times and class discussions.

Assessment and Observation

When children begin FS2 the teachers and pre-schools share the “Moving on document” together. Along with this information and discussion the teachers may also meet the child in their pre-school setting too. In September the child’s class teacher and TA will visit the child at their home prior to them beginning school. This information will go towards the child’s baseline assessment. We carry out the baseline assessment using TWHF baseline document and recognise that from September 2020 we will follow the recommendations from the Government and DfE.

Once our baseline assessments have been completed, each child’s level of development is recorded against the seven areas of learning and development. We use a ‘best fit’ measure to identify where children are working within the ELG. It is through observations and activities that teachers assess where the child is in relation to the Early Learning Goals.

“Observational assessment is the most reliable way of building up an accurate picture of a children’s development and learning...especially where the attainment demonstrated is not dependent on overt adult support. Observational assessment is central to understanding what children really know and can do” (page 11)

STA (November 2019) Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The observations that the FS2 teachers and TAs carry out, can range from incidentals on post-it notes and stickers or longer observations. Some observations may be made and not recorded but used to inform the teacher’s professional judgement of where the child is working. Photos may be taken to support evidence. Pieces of work and creations that the children have produced through their child initiated play also contribute towards the child’s assessment.

We have wow certificates that parents are encouraged to fill out and bring into school. We then celebrate any learning that has taken place at home.

Although adult led activities can offer insight into children’s attainment by making sure the child has the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. It is mostly evidence through observing children through their child initiated time and activities that are used as judgements for the EYFS profile.

The ongoing assessments of the children are collected and recorded into the child’s Learning Journey. Their progress is evident here too. The collaboration of all of this is recorded onto our tracking system Pupil Asset which is updated four times a year.

Within term six we use the information from Pupil Asset to formulate a report to parents. Along with a personal comment, this will state their progress against the Early Learning Goals and the child’s Characteristics of Effective Learning.

“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play through a mix of adult-led and child initiated activity” (page 9)

DfE (2019) Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Moderation takes place within Haydon Wick and across the WHF and schools in the local area. We use the Early Years foundation stage assessment and reporting arrangements (ARA) 2019.

The Learning Environment

At Haydon Wick we recognise the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. The FS2 classrooms which incorporate the indoor and outdoor areas, are well organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and to be quiet.

The environments are set up into learning areas where children are able to find and locate resources and equipment independently.

The outdoor part of the environment has a positive effect on the children’s development and we see it as an integral part of the children’s learning. It acts as an extension to the indoor environment, allowing the children to be physically active and encourages the use of their senses. SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT.

Our learning environments operate in a free flow way, whereby the children can choose which area of the environment they would like to explore. This is around the adult led activities that take place throughout the day.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and tolerate a no discrimination philosophy. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability. All children and families are valued within our school. We recognise that all pupils bring different experiences, interests and strengths which influence the way they learn and we encourage all children to succeed and do their best.

We aim to give each child the opportunity to experience success in their learning and ensure equal opportunities will be extended to all pupils.

We encourage children to develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others, therefore we praise and encourage as well as celebrate achievements of that are made in school and at home.

Special Needs

Those children which are recognised as having Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND) will follow similar programmes of study to their peers. However, the work, if necessary will be differentiated to meet their individual needs. We offer each child on the SEND register a Provision Map. This tracks the child’s progress and identifies their targets / next steps. These are discussed and agreed with parents 3 times a year.

Safeguarding

Haydon Wick Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in its care. "The welfare of the pupil/student is paramount." (Children Act 1989.)

Our staff and Governors are committed to safeguarding the pupil/students at this school and contributes to multi-agency working to keep pupils and students safe.

All adults working in our school maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. We recognise that staff, because of their contact with and knowledge of children in their care, are well placed to identify abuse or neglect and offer support to children in need.

Working in Partnership with Parents And Carers

We recognise that parents are children's first and enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We appreciate the role that parents have played and their future role in educating their children. We do this through

- Talking to parents about their child before they start school
- The teacher (with the class TA) offer to visit all children in their home setting prior to starting school
- The children have the opportunity to come into school to spend time in the environment and getting to know their teacher.
- They are invited into the setting for a story session and a transition morning stay and stay and play session, before starting school.
- We invite all parents to an induction meeting during the term before they start school
- Offering parents regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress in the classes before and after school sessions. Or any concerns either the teacher or parent may have
- Encouraging parents to contribute to their child's Learning Journey. Parents may write achievements at home on a WOW certificate. These are shared then displayed and filed.
- Sending home a toy to come back and share their weekend.
- Parents are invited to come into the classroom once a term, to share their child's Learning Journey and join in with an activity e.g. share a book, play a maths game, carry out some arts and crafts.
- We also offer parents the chance to come and watch a phonics session and a number session

The Adults in The Early Years Team

We provide the children with a safe and secure environment. As adults in FS2 we aim to develop good relationships with all children interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. We also model and support children in forming positive relationships and friendships with one another. At our school it is the FS2 teachers that act as the 'Key Person' to all of the children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants. We have good links with our Barn Owl Pre School. Regular visits are undertaken by the EYFS teachers. Staff and children from Barn Owls are often invited to each other's settings for planned events or for play time sessions and story times.

All members of staff have access to continued professional development to maintain and extend their specialist expertise.

Health and Safety

We recognise the importance of close supervision of the children during activities undertaken in the environment, both indoors and outdoors. We invite parents and educational support assistants to help the class teacher ensure the safety of the children.

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