

Hudson Road Primary School

Early Years Policy

Within this policy, the term Early Years (EY) refers to our children in Nursery and Reception.

Within this policy, the term Parents is used as shorthand, but refers to all parents and carers who have responsibility for the child.

Intent

In Hudson Road Primary School Early Years, we recognise that each child, who starts their school journey with us, is unique, curious, and independent. We encourage our children to develop a strong attitude towards learning, and to become confident in all areas of their development. Our children are encouraged to learn through play, to create, explore, discover, imagine, watch, listen, talk, take risks and make mistakes. Our environments are designed to feel warm and homely, to create a sense of belonging and well-being, and invoke a sense of awe and wonder every day. We develop and maintain positive and collaborative partnerships with our parents and carers.

Aims

To provide a safe and secure learning environment, indoors and outdoors, where our children can

- develop and utilise key skills in Speech, Language and Communication, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Phonics, Early Reading and Mastering Number.
- Access our balanced curriculum, using play as the means for learning.
- Have access to high-quality interactions with staff, and each other.
- Have equality of opportunity for all – each child is unique, and we accept their individual starting points.

Overview

Early Years is for children from Birth to Five, usually the end of the Reception year. In our school, our provision is for 3 & 4 year olds in Nursery, (September and January intake), and for 4 & 5 year olds in Reception, (September intake following application to the Local Authority).

We seek to continually increase staff knowledge of high-quality practice, which enables us to provide the most effective teaching and provision for our children. Within the wider school, all staff have access to Early Years training, both in-house and outside of school, including our subject leaders.

The Early Years Curriculum

The Early Years Curriculum Guidance we use is published by the Department of Education, which is devised into:

- Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage: Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five
- Development Matters: non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage.

Development Matters sets out the three prime areas of learning that underpin *everything* in our Early Years:

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

The four specific areas support children to strengthen and apply the prime areas in their development:

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

All areas of learning are connected. The characteristics of effective teaching and learning weave through them all. This ensures that our children in the early years become more powerful learners and thinkers, but at their own pace, and in their own way. Our staff are adept in adjusting our practice to support the child's development in the most appropriate and effective way. The characteristics develop as our children learn to do new things, acquire new skills, develop socially and emotionally, and become more effective communicators.

- *Playing and Exploring* – children investigate, 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, making links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We use the following programmes to support our children's learning and development:

- Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Framework - phonic and early literacy development and skills.
- NCETM Mastering Number and Mathematics - maths development and skills.
- Helicopter Stories – story telling and story acting skills.
- Early Talk Boost and Talk Boost – develop confidence in communication.
- Talk Talk Bags are used to support story sharing at home.

Seven key features of effective practice

1. The best for every child.

We believe that every child is unique and has their own individual style of learning and development, and that each one deserves to have an equal chance of success. We offer personalised learning opportunities for all our children, working closely with their family and other professionals.

Our Early Years staff are dedicated, highly skilled and have an in-depth understanding of the process involved in children's growth, development, and learning. Our curriculum is designed to offer opportunities for our children to develop a positive sense of self and their culture. We know that our children learn in different ways and at different rates, and we ensure that this is planned for in our provision.

The Early Years Lead is responsible for the EY staff, children, and environments, and ensuring that all staff maintain high quality of care, effective teaching, and outstanding provisions, so our children receive the best start in their education. The EY Lead is a member of the SLT and implements EY training and development for all staff across our school.

2. High quality care.

We know that our children thrive when they are loved and well cared for, and we strive to ensure that this is consistent for all our children. Our children's well-being and involvement is paramount to all aspects of our Early Years provision, and our staff are highly effective in responding to the needs of our children. Our staff ensure that all transitions to the next stage of development are well planned and meet the needs of each child within our setting.

3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn.

Our curriculum is designed to ensure that our children have daily access to high-quality teaching and learning opportunities. This may be through a specific theme, experience, child-led interest or enquiry, or whole school theme or topic. We believe that depth in all areas of early learning is essential for all our children, rather than coverage of many things in a superficial way.

In Early Years, our children have *daily opportunities* to develop, extend and consolidate the knowledge, skills and vocabulary required to become successful across all areas. This takes place through child-initiated learning, planned experiences and activities, studies of a particular person or skill, or alongside whole school themes or events. All learning is documented in our Nursery and Reception floor books, with child and adult annotations, next steps and links to Development Matters & Oracy. Reception record in individual books for phonics, writing and maths. Documentation is shown within our indoor and outdoor environments, through displays, photographs, and writing.

In Nursery, we plan what we want our children to learn during each half term. The half term plan shows the theme or subject that we link the learning too, the skills we want the children to develop, and resources that we may use. The theme is introduced, and then we observe and follow our children in their interests, enquires and exploration. Each week, we review the progress of our children, and adapt the plan to follow, add or remove provocations to support the learning. We use Mastering Number for our mathematical development, and Little Wandle Letters and Sounds: Foundations for Phonics for our early literacy development.

In Reception, we plan for each half term using a theme or whole school interest. We plan for continuous provision indoors and outdoors. We use Mastering Number and other focus maths sessions to develop our mathematical knowledge, and Little Wandle Letters and Sounds for our phonics and early literacy skills.

All staff in school have access to our *Early Years: Knowledge, Vocabulary and Skills* progression documents for each wider curriculum subject. These documents underpin our

planning across Early Years, and give Senior Leaders a more in-depth knowledge of our outcomes, use of vocabulary and skills.

Speech, Language and Communication, and Oracy development is paramount to our curriculum, and underpins all areas of learning - our language rich environments provide the knowledge, skills and vocabulary that are needed to support future progression. Staff can provide expert support in this area of development.

4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn

We believe that all our children are powerful learners, and that every child in our provision, can make progress in their learning. Our pedagogy focuses on the child at the centre and is effective through a range of different approaches. Our children learn through play, actively learning, creating and thinking critically, supported by adult teaching and modelling, and by observing each other and adults.

Through play, our children can achieve their highest learning potential, with wide-ranging interests and experiences. We believe that play with, and alongside their peers, is crucial for our children and enables them to understand how to be with each other, to talk and collaborate, develop a sense of boundary and expectation, to investigate and solve problems. Through play, our children make sense of the world around them, and this will enable them to become involved and sustain their attention. Through physical activities and mental challenges, our children develop a sense of motivation and interest, as they are given time and space to establish independence in their learning. We know that as our children develop their confidence, a sense of achievement and pride evolves, as they take ownership of their learning. We encourage our children to build on these skills, as they discover connections and a deeper understanding of the ways in which things happen. Our staff extend their critical thinking through skilful questioning, conversations and allow time for responses, clarification and to address misconceptions. Our children access the resources freely and may choose to use them across all areas of our provisions.

Our staff create high-quality, indoor and outdoor effective learning environments, that encourage our children to explore, practice, make mistakes, take risks, make friendships, and imagine. We know that our environments are paramount to the learning that takes place. Our staff enable our children to be confident in their play and learning and know when to extend learning and development.

Nursery and Reception share our outdoor space, with access from both classrooms.

5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

All our EY staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of child development and are highly skilled in the stages of progression from Birth to Five. Our staff are clear about what we want our children to learn, and how they will be able to do so. We observe our children every day and note the progression in their learning.

Nursery complete a non-statutory baseline assessment of each child during the first 3 weeks of starting Nursery. This focuses on Communication and Language, Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Throughout the year, Nursery staff will use the observational checkpoints from Development Matters, to support our assessment of the child's development and progress.

Reception complete the Reception Baseline Assessment within 6 weeks of the child starting school. The baseline is a practical and interactive assessment of the child's communication and language, mathematics, and early literacy skills. Staff also assess for phonics, reading and maths, and this is formally recorded using assessment documents from the frameworks. Children in Reception are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) to ascertain a Good Level of Development (GLD) at the end of the year. The data is shared with the Local Authority in June.

Staff use their knowledge of child development to ascertain if our children need any additional support or to identify specific needs. When this is noted, staff inform the Early Years SENCO, Rachel Golding.

6. Self-regulation and executive function

Executive function and self-regulation skills are paramount to the development of all our children. These mental processes allow our children to plan, focus attention, remember instructions and juggle multiple tasks successfully. We strive to provide opportunities for all our children, so that they can learn and embed these skills across all areas of their progression. Executive function requires our children to hold information in their mind; focus their attention; regulate their behaviour; plan what to do next. By developing these abilities, our children will develop a growing ability to self-regulate, which supports how they focus their thinking; monitor what they are doing and adapt; regulate strong feelings; be patient for what they want; bounce back when things get difficult. Central to this is language development, and how our children communicate. Staff encourage our children to communicate in their own way, in every opportunity, allowing time for our children to think, guide their play and actions through talk, and to plan the next steps.

7. Partnership with parents

We know that our children will learn to be happy, confident and independent through strong and secure relationships, and that this begins at home with their parents and families. We understand that our parents and carers are their child's first and most enduring educator, and do not underestimate the importance of their relationships with their child. We recognise the role that have played and will continue to play in educating their children.

How we support our partnership with parents:

- Open door policy in both Nursery and Reception classes. Parents have daily opportunities to speak to class teachers and teaching assistants (drop off and collection times).
- Parents can make an appointment to speak to the class teacher at a suitable time.
- Parents are invited to attend Stay & Play sessions during each half term.
- Parents are invited to join us on academic outings and visits.
- Parents are encouraged to share activities, events and special occasions with us, so that we can encourage the children to talk about it.
- Reception parents are invited to Parent Consultations in the Spring and Summer Term.
- All parents are invited to Induction meetings before the child starts Nursery (*see Induction section*).
- All parents receive a written report at the end of the school year, which details their child's progress.
- We seek parent views and comments on their child's time with us at regular intervals throughout the year.

The Early Years Foundation Profile (EYFSP)

The EYFSP must be completed by the end of June, in the final term when the child turns 5 years old. The profile allows staff to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of all our children at the end of their time in the Early Years. The data we collect is used to:

- Inform parents about their child's development in reaching the Early Learning Goals.
- Support smooth transitions to Key Stage 1 (KS1) by informing the professional dialogue between staff.
- Support Year 1 staff to plan an effective and responsive curriculum that will meet the needs of the children at the beginning of KS1.
- Monitor trends in the data – termly and presented at whole school data staff meeting.
- Plan targets and strategies for the following year.

The EYFSP provides an accurate national data record relating to levels of child development and learning. The DfE uses this data monitor changes in levels of children's development and the readiness for the next phase of their education both nationally and locally. At the end of EY, our Reception staff review all the information for each child, and make a judgement for each ELG, which ascertains if the child's learning and development is:

- meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected)
- not yet reaching this level (emerging)
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The ELGs are based on typical child development at the age of 5, so most children are likely to meet the 'expected' level of development. Our Reception teachers use their professional knowledge of the child to decide whether each ELG description best fits the child's learning and development.

Our Provision

Our Early Years provision is organised as follows:

Nursery: 3 & 4 year old provision for 52 children.
Morning session for 26 children (8.45am – 11.45am)
Afternoon session for 26 children (12.30pm – 3.30pm)

1 Teacher, 1 Senior Teaching Assistant, 1 EY Apprentice

For children aged three and over in maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools, there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children; at least one member of staff must be a school teacher as defined by section 122 of the Education Act 2002; at least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification.

Reception: 4 & 5 year old provision for 45 children.
Full day (8.40am – 3.15pm)

2 Teachers, 1 Senior Teaching Assistant, 1 SEN Teaching Assistant

Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size legislation. The School Admissions (Infant Class Size) Regulations 2012 limit the size of infant classes to 30 pupils per school teacher, (subject to permitted exceptions) while an ordinary teaching session is conducted. 'School teachers' do not include teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants or other support staff. Consequently, in an ordinary teaching session, a school must employ sufficient school teachers to enable it to teach its infant classes in groups of no more than 30 per school teacher.

Nursery and Reception classrooms are within the Early Years Bay. The classrooms are organised within their own spaces and are separated by a room divider. Nursery and Reception share the

outdoor spaces, which are timetabled. We have a boot room and changing space under the Nursery canopy, where our children access their outdoor clothing and wellies. All wellies are stored with the child's photo next to them, so children can access their wellies easily.

Nursery has its own entrance with gate, with the canopy providing cover for coats, bags and wellies, and the Art Studio. Reception enter via the outside door within their classroom. This is accessed through the KS1 school yard.

The provision within the classrooms is designed to meet the age and needs of our children, allowing us to provide a more bespoke and tailored approach to their learning and development that will support challenge, reflection, and progression.

The majority of our Nursery children will move into the Reception class in the September following their 4th birthday.

Admissions

Nursery:

Intake in September and January, following the child's 3rd birthday.

- Parents can register their children after their 2nd birthday.
- Parents complete a registration form and provide a copy of their child's birth certificate.
- Acceptance letters are sent in March or November before the intake. Request for additional needs or support are made on letter. This allows us to begin to plan for any medical or special educational needs.
- Child and parents are invited to an Initial Visit in June or December before the intake. Information is shared about the next steps of Induction, and provides an opportunity for families to see Nursery, and ask any questions.
- Confirmation of session, Induction Visit times, and start date are sent out at the beginning of July or in December.
- Child and parents attend an Induction Visit, in school, during the first week of September or January. This allows us to gather information that will help the child to settle into Nursery and recorded on our Induction Visit form. We will ask for any updates regarding the child's health and any concerns that the parent may have. Induction Visit times are shared again with the parents.
- Parents will provide written consent for the collection of their child, health and medical needs and procedures, use of photographs for social media, and provide up to date contact information. They will also sign to agree to information sharing with other relevant professionals.
- The child starts their visits with us in the second week of September or January.

Reception:

Intake in September.

- Parents apply for their child's school place to the Local Authority, during the admission period from November to January.
- Parents receive notice of place during April and need to complete the acceptance form.
- Reception staff receive list of all admissions in April. This is usually updated at intervals throughout the summer term.
- Confirmation letters are sent out in May.
- Information on Induction procedures is sent out in June.

- Child and parents are invited to an open visit in July, to meet Reception staff and to see the environments. Information is shared about starting school, including initial visits, expectations, and lunch times.
- Child starts school in September.

Parents can request for their child to join our Nursery or Reception at other times in the year that may fall outside of our Induction phases. Applications are made to the School Office, who will confirm if a space is available, and then follow the admission procedures above.

No child is allowed to start in Nursery without a completed registration form, an Induction Visit with their parents, and shorter visits into the classroom.

Safety

Our children's safety and welfare are paramount. We create safe and secure environments and provide experiences that support our children to learn how to be safe, to take risks, to understand their limits and to assess their surroundings. We have thorough policies, procedures and risk assessments in place to ensure our children are safe. We promote the good health of our children, and encourage healthy nutrition, cleanliness and follow First Aid procedures in the event of an accident or emergency. Our children's dietary and medical needs are noted on medical care plans. Children with significant medical needs have their own 'alert', which is placed on the kitchen door in Nursery, and next to telephones in both classrooms (Nursery kitchen and Reception classroom, next to quiet room). Medication is stored within our indoor classrooms (medication cupboard in Nursery and secure box in Reception). Asthma inhalers are stored within a named bag, easily accessible for staff but out of reach of children.

Inclusion

We value all our children, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, gender or ability. We plan our curriculum to meet the needs of the individual child, which supports them at their own pace. This allows all our children to make progress, to meet their goals, and to achieve, or exceed, the Early Learning Goals.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities / Medical Needs

We strongly believe that Early Identification of children with SEND or medical needs is crucial for us to provide the right level of care and support for the child. We work closely with the parents to identify or ascertain any needs or concerns. Parents are asked to provide written consent to sharing information with other relevant professionals.

Any identified needs are shared with the Early Years SENCO, Rachel Golding, and the Speech and Language Lead, Louise Noble.

To support our children with additional needs, we work closely with the following professionals:

- Health Visitors
- Speech and Language Therapists (Community & ADIT)
- Paediatricians
- CAMHS
- GP
- Children's Services

- Early Help
- Portage
- Autism Outreach Team
- Together for Children Early Years Advisory Team
- Specialist Medical Professionals (Epi-pen, Diabetes, Allergies)

Safeguarding

Our 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. Keeping our children safe is the responsibility of all staff who work directly with our children in the Early Years, and within the wider school.

Please see the school's current Child Protection Policy for more information:
www.hudsonroad.org.uk

Related Policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy.
- Online and Computing Policy.
- Educational Visits.
- Curriculum Policy.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Phonics and early Reading Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Positive Handling Policy.
- Whole School Food Policy.
- Medication Policy.
- Data Protection Policy.
- Fire Evacuation Policy.