Headcorn Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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1. 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.
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with parents and carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

At Headcorn Primary School we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring, and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs;
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant, and creative curriculum that will set in place firm early years values ahead of further development in key stage one and beyond;
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress from their starting point;
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence;
- Develop and work in close partnership with parents and carers, valuing their contributions and ensuring all children irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family backgrounds, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender, or ability;
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development;
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2024 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework: EYFS Framework 1st Nov 24

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth until the age of five years old. At Headcorn Primary School children join the Foundation Stage in the September after their fourth birthday. We have two EYFS classes who share the learning environment as much as possible. At Headcorn Primary School, we recognise the importance of the Early Years curriculum within a child's development and view the foundation year as an essential period in a child's life. It is here where firm foundations are built to create life-long learners who continue to develop the skills required to be 'Learning for life'.

4.Curriculum

Our Early Years setting follows the programmes of study as outlined in the 2024 EYFS Statutory Framework. We follow the progression and skills across all seven areas of learning from Cornerstones which links with the EYFS programmes of study and the ELGs.
The Early Years Foundation Stage is currently made up of seven areas of learning and development. These areas are all important and are inter-connecting.
These seven areas are further split into our three 'Prime' areas and four 'Specific' areas.

Prime Areas

The three prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.
These three areas are:
Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)
Physical Development (PD)
Communication and Language (CL)

They are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in the specific areas of learning.

Specific Areas

The specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are:
Literacy (L)
Mathematics (M)
Understanding the World (UTW)
Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)

The new framework has a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary, with more examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across all 7 areas because this improves child development in a broad curriculum.

As set out in the EYFS Statutory guidance, at Headcorn Primary School we provide the following experiences for children in our Foundation Stage to ensure a balanced cultural capital:

Communication and Language (Prime Area) development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills to express themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical Development (Prime Area) involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive and to develop their co-ordination, gross and fine motor control, and movement. For example, fine motor control is to hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing and gross motor control is large scale movements such as climbing, coordination, balancing, running, jumping. Children must be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food and exercise.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Prime Area) involves helping children to develop a positive self-identity and to celebrate those of others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills, develop self-regulation and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently.

Literacy (Specific Area) development involves encouraging children to link letters and sounds and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.

Mathematics (Specific Area) involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, developing a strong grounding in number, a deep understanding of numbers to 10 and the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers, and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

Understanding the World (Specific Area) involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology, and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design (Specific Area) involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Characteristics of Effective Learning
We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and Exploring – Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and '*have a go'*. *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.* EYFS, 2007

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world around them. They practise and build on their own ideas and those presented to them. They learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own and how to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active learning – Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. EYFS, 2007

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need 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.

Creating and thinking critically – We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between them and develop strategies for doing things.
When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions. EYFS, 2007

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, introducing new vocabulary, clarifying ideas and asking open-ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning. This learning allows children to develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role and think creatively.

4.1 Planning

At Headcorn Primary School planning is divided into long term, medium term, and short -term planning.

- Long term plans state the topics to be covered each year with ideas to plan throughout each strand of the curriculum.
- Medium term plans illustrate objectives being taught each term including key core texts.
- Short term or weekly plans show specific activities and planned for objectives for the cohort of children. These will include a variety of adult-led activities and provision to inspire and support child-led learning. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity throughout the week. This is carefully monitored and altered as the year progresses and we begin to support children's transition into Year One.

Planning Process

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is informed through observations we make of the children within our environment. All staff who are in the EYFS team are involved in the process of planning to consider moving children forwards from where they are in their learning, development, and next steps, and learning needs within the cohort.

The planning within the EYFS is based around the EYFS Statutory Framework and the progression and skills from Cornerstones Curriculum. These plans are used by the whole team as a guide for weekly planning. However, we may alter these in response to the needs of the children which helps create a high level of motivation for their learning.

Planning Environments

At Headcorn Primary School we are fortunate to have a wonderful outside environment as a shared area and two separate classrooms. Our classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. Each classroom has defined learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. These areas can be active, quiet, creative, imaginative, etc.

The outside area has equal importance within the foundation stage and children can free flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing

things in different ways, and on different scales than when inside. As well as offering opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement and promoting a sense of well-being, they can explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for both indoor and outdoor environments, enabling children to develop all areas of their learning within both environments.

4.2 Monitoring

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.

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

Observations of children's play and learning are made throughout the school day. We use a variety of methods to establish what children have learnt and their next steps, including observations whilst playing alongside children, a home learning journal, and independent learning carried out during child-initiated learning time. Evidence is collected and used towards the seven ELGs.

5. Assessment

At Headcorn Primary 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. Practitioners also consider observations shared by parents and carers and of that from child's voice.

Upon entry the staff assess the children using the new statutory National Reception Baseline assessment within the first 6 weeks of the children starting school. At Headcorn Primary School we endeavour to use this statutory assessment in a fun and engaging manner using manipulative and small table-top activities.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting Expected levels of development or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('Emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, teacher knowledge and discussions with parents and carers as well as evidence gathered from Child's voice. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and carers.

During the first term in reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using the Statutory Baseline Assessment. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. The foundation stage profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the foundation stage and to summarise the progress made by individuals towards the Early Learning Goals.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both observations, photographic evidence-based floor books, and planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves all staff within the EYFS setting. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage is a statutory requirement.

At Headcorn Primary School we keep learning journals, to include some examples of children's work, as a range of evidence to be shared with parents and carers at each parent and carer consultation meeting.
During the summer term a summary of these assessments are sent to the local authority for analysis. This data is also shared with the next teacher and with parents and carers during parent and carer consultation meetings and in the child's end of year report.

Parents and carers receive a written report in Term 6 which comments on their child's characteristics of effective learning and the progress made within each area of the curriculum.

6. Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. EYFS profile helps to provide parents and carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

The class teacher acts as the key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

New reception parents and carers are invited to attend a workshop evening in the summer term to provide them with essential information for the first academic year.

During the summer term prior to the children starting school the following September, the transition process will include the following:

- The child's class teacher will visit the child at their nursery or pre-school setting to meet them and their key workers to discuss the child as a learner. If a meeting cannot take place in person a phone call will be made as an alternative communication.
- The child will be invited to attend an hour's session on our school transition day to meet their teacher, explore the environment and hear a story.
- EYFS staff photos and biographies, sample uniforms, photos of the classrooms, outdoor area and other main features of the school site, will be provided to feeder nurseries and to families in order to support transition.
- Home visits can be offered to meet the children and families in the home environment if required.
- All parents and carers will be asked to complete a questionnaire to inform the school of helpful information regarding their child.
- All parents and carers will be offered a phone call to discuss their child in more detail if they feel that this would be beneficial.
- If it is felt a meeting would be beneficial regarding a child's specific needs, then this will be offered, or a phone call will be made as an alternative communication.

When children join school in September the following procedures will apply for them to gradually adjust to their new surroundings and establish positive relationships:

- Each child and their parent and carers will be invited to attend two Stay and Play sessions so they can spend time with teachers and Teaching Assistants, in the Early Years environment.
- Families will be offered either a week staggered start entry or full time-entry in order to ensure they become familiar with staff, routines, and environments.

If families opt for a staggered entry into school, they will be grouped according to their age with the younger children predominantly attending during the morning sessions and older children attending in the afternoon.
All children will be invited to stay for lunch with parents or carers before attending full-time.

Transition into Year One

During the summer terms we begin to prepare children for transition into Year 1 and the key stage one curriculum. We have put provision and opportunities in place to support this transition period. These include:

- A transition between Reception and Year 1; so, children become familiar with staff and areas in the Year 1 environment. This area is then used by children as they start Year 1 to access an element of free flow in an already familiar setting.
- Story sessions held by their new class teacher and an opportunity to get to know them better.
- A thorough handover between teachers ahead of the summer holiday.
- Early Years staff to support children into their new environment, where needed, during the first week of Year 1.
- Profile data is shared with the SLT and Y1 teachers to inform their practice and to improve Early Years practice.

7. Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Safeguarding Policy.

At Headcorn Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021:

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe, and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- To promote good health including promoting good oral health
- To manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting, furniture, and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.
- To be in ear and eye shot of children who are eating and drinking.

Keeping Safe

In the Early Years we recognise the importance that all children are 'safe'.
Our curriculum and learning environments help children to learn boundaries, rules and limits and aim to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards.

Good Health

All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk. They always have access to water. Staff are in ear and eye shot of children eating and drinking.

Working in Partnership

We highly place the benefits of working in partnership have a huge impact on the effectiveness of our EYFS setting.
We value our partnerships and endeavour to actively maintain these by sharing information, ideas, expertise, and our knowledge within our team and with parents, carers, colleagues, and other professionals.
Within our role of enabling partnerships we:

- Meet weekly with EYFS team to discuss assessments, planning, individual children's needs.
- Hold parent and carer workshops or provide them with online video links on relevant areas of their children's development e.g. maths, reading, phonics.

- Work closely with moderation groups to share practice and support colleagues across the local area.
- We moderate our judgements within our own setting in collaboration with SLT (Senior Leadership Team), ELT (Extended Leadership Team) and Year 1.

SEND Policy

Opportunities to develop and enhance the skills of gifted and talented pupils are provided both within the classroom and through the provision of specific projects and activities.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Head Teacher every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

Appendix 1. List of Statutory Policies and Procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is on the school website
Procedure for responding to illness	See First Aid Policy (including the Management of Medical Conditions and Intimate Care) which is on the school website
Administering medicines policy	See First Aid Policy (including the Management of Medical Conditions and Intimate Care) which is on the school website
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety Policy is available upon request.
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is on the school website
Procedures for a parent and carer failing to collect a child and for missing children	See the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy which is on the school website
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Procedure which is on the school website

Paper copies of all of these policies can be provided upon request.