

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Hawthorn Primary School



Approved by: Teaching and Learning Committee

Last reviewed on: September 2024

Next review due by: September 2025

Rationale

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to pupils from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Hawthorn Primary School this refers to pupils in our Reception class.

We have one Reception class, offering thirty places. The class is staffed by one Teacher and one Teaching Assistant. There may be additional Teaching Assistants working in Reception to support the needs of children with EHCPs or Support Plans. There is an Early Years Lead currently working in Key Stage One, that works closely alongside the Reception staff team.

In line with the DfE's 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage', our goal is to ensure pupils' 'school readiness' and to provide them with the knowledge and skills needed to prepare them for progress through school and life.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- Every child is unique.
- Positive relationships nurture pupils to be strong and independent.
- Enabling environments encourage good learning and development.
- Pupils develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

We apply the above principles throughout pupils' journeys through the early years, including during periods of transition, to ensure all pupils are prepared for the next stage in their education. Through a play based approach to learning, we aim to develop the personal, intellectual, physical, and cultural development of all pupils by supporting the 'whole child' and their individual needs in a secure and stimulating environment.

We seek to provide:

- Quality and consistency, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A secure foundation through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed regularly
- Partnership working between practitioners, parents and other professionals.
- Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Aims of the EYFS

- To give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish a solid foundation for a love of learning.
- To provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS Statutory Guidance, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- To promote personal, social and emotional wellbeing, encouraging pupils to develop independence within a secure and friendly environment.
- To plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.

- To promote positive dispositions and attitudes towards learning, providing pupils with the opportunities to communicate their ideas and to listen to those of others.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum

Each teacher at Hawthorn Primary follows the detailed guidance, thus ensuring continuity and progression in both teaching and learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we plan, resource and support learning by extending play, both indoors and outdoors.

Through play pupils can:

- explore experiences that help them make sense of the world
- practice and develop ideas, concepts and skills
- learn how to control impulses and understand the needs of others and rules
- play alone and alongside others co-operatively
- take risks and learn from mistakes
- think creatively and imaginatively
- communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems
- develop concentration and the effective characteristics of learning

There are seven areas of learning, three of which are called prime areas and four are specific areas of learning.

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development (*Prime*)

Pupils are provided with experiences and support that will help them to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others, respect others' social skills and a positive disposition to learn. We ensure support for pupils' emotional well-being to help them to know themselves and what they can do.

2. Communication and Language (*Prime*)

Pupils are supported to develop learning and competence in communication via speaking, understanding and listening. They are provided with opportunities and encouragement to use their skills in a range of situations and for a range of purposes.

3. Physical Development (*Prime*)

Pupils are provided with opportunities to be active and interactive. They are supported to improve their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement using all their senses to learn about the world around them and make connections between new information and what they already know. They are supported in developing an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food and personal hygiene.

4. Literacy (*Specific*)

Pupils are encouraged to enjoy books, stories and poetry, for their personal language development and to extend their views of the world, excite their curiosity and fire their imagination. Phonics is taught on a daily basis within small groups and a range of reading and writing opportunities are planned to enable pupils to develop key literacy skills.

5. Mathematics (*Specific*)

Pupils are supported to develop their understanding of numbers, calculation and numerical pattern in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn and speak about their developing understanding. They are provided with opportunities to practise and extend their skills in these areas and to gain confidence in their use. Pupils are encouraged to create their own mathematical problems, solve them in their own way and discuss what they have done.

6. Understanding of the World (*Specific*)

Pupils are supported to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that help them make sense of the world. We offer opportunities for them to use a range of tools safely, encounter creatures, people, plants and objects in their natural environments and in real life situations.

We plant vegetables within our school garden, and harvest them throughout the year. This allows pupils to see how vegetables are grown, discuss and see how they have changed and how they can taste differently when cooked in a range of ways.

We undertake practical experiments and work with a wide range of materials. We support the development of their skills with 'Information Communication Technology' to maximise their progress in all seven areas of learning.

7. Expressive Arts and Design (*Specific*)

Pupils' creativity is extended by providing support in developing their curiosity, exploration and play. They are provided with opportunities to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities. The pupils' musical understanding is further developed with our school In Harmony project, where the pupils have music lessons two times a week from a professional through which they learn to explore percussion, continue a beat or pulse, read simple music, explore singing and changing songs and movement in a range of ways.

Planning

Planning is undertaken at three levels:

Long term planning is based on the seven areas of Learning and the Early Learning Goals set out in the Foundation Stage Curriculum Document.

Medium term planning is carried out half-termly within the EYFS team.

Medium term plans outline possible lines of development (PLOD) over a flexible period of time. They show planned adult-led activities linked to the pupils' interests, seasons, celebrations and school initiatives in all seven areas of learning.

Short term planning is carried out daily for all areas to ensure we are planning and using our assessments and following the pupils' needs and interests. These plans include the learning objectives, the activities chosen as the vehicle for achieving the objectives, differentiation, special resources and any key vocabulary or questions. These activities are linked to the early outcomes and early learning goals.

Cross Curricular Links

In order to create a cohesive and meaningful learning programme for our pupils, we try to identify links during the planning stage and give pupils the opportunity to use their subject knowledge and skills in real contexts.

Teaching Methods and Approaches

The teacher verbally makes clear to the pupils at the start of the lesson exactly what it is they will learn and what they should be able to do after the session.

The teaching at Hawthorn provides opportunities for:

- Group work
- Paired work, including mixed ability and similar ability pairs
- Whole class teaching
- Individual work

At Hawthorn we recognise the importance of establishing a secure foundation in all seven areas of learning and using vocabulary appropriate to the task. We endeavour to set work which is challenging, motivating and which encourages the pupils to speak about what they have been doing.

Organisation

We recognise that differentiation involves adjusting teaching to meet the learning needs of individual pupils. Differentiation should be taken into account when planning work; it is not possible to match every task to the ability of every child, but there are certain strategies that can be adopted to ensure that most pupils are working at the right level.

Differentiation Techniques

- Differential by outlook
- Differential by task
- Differential by teacher input

Strategies to assist differential

- Groupings by ability, setting targets at different levels
- Open ended investigations
- Mixed ability group, pupils supporting each other
- Different methods of recording
- Adapting mathematical demands on investigations
- Incorporating extension activities into planning
- More able students working independently, so teacher can support a particular group of pupils

Learning Environments

The natural way for pupils to learn is through play. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we plan, resource and support learning by extending play both indoors and outdoors.

We believe that all learning takes place as effectively in both the indoor and the outdoor environments. We recognise that some learning can only be effective when achieved outdoors and that kinaesthetic learners are more likely to achieve when working outdoors. Outside, pupils develop motor skills and benefit from fresh air and exercise. They have the freedom to take responsibility and to display an enthusiasm towards learning, becoming aware of a wider environment and working in a less formal setting.

In playing outdoors, pupils behave in different ways: their play may be boisterous, alternatively they may describe and discuss what they are doing, and they can be quiet and reflective as they play. When pupils play outdoors they take ownership and follow their own ideas more, they seek support or clarification from their peers.

Access to the outdoor environment

Pupils will have access to the outdoor environment in the morning before lunch, during their lunch break, and during the afternoon each day.

Display

We recognise the importance displays have in informing, stimulating, motivating and celebrating the work of our pupils. Work displayed should reflect the different abilities of the pupils. Work will be named and easily identified by its owner. Displays are labelled with simple captions that the pupils should be able to read. Displays will have a brief description if needed, to allow others to understand its purpose. Pupils will create labels for their work if appropriate. Displays within the classroom are regularly changed to allow the pupils to see the importance of the work they do and allow a new stimulus of communication. Some displays are interactive and allow the pupils to develop their skills.

Assessment and Record Keeping

On entry to Reception, the class teacher reads nursery reports and carries out observational assessments used to create a baseline for each child against the Early Years Foundation Stage in all seven areas of learning. All pupils complete the statutory 'Baseline Assessment' in their first six weeks of starting school and results are reported to the DfE. Progress is monitored during the three terms, Autumn, Spring and Summer and assessments consider the pupils' age, gender, looked after pupils, EAL, SEN, WWCB, gifted and pupils eligible for free school meals. These assessments also inform future planning.

- Observations of child-led and adult-led activities are carried out by all members of the Early Years Foundation Stage team and these inform the termly assessments.
- Pupils' individual Learning Journals are updated regularly with written observations of the pupils' work or activities which they have chosen to carry out which and are supported by a picture or video where possible. Adults record the pupils' voice where possible and all observations are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage development matters and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile for pupils in the Reception classes. Journals are also linked via email to the pupils' parents. When an observation is uploaded, they are sent a notification allowing parents to respond and comment.

Assessment outcomes are used to inform the next cycle of planning, thus ensuring a match of work to the needs of the pupils and ensuring progress. Assessments are carried out on three levels:

Short term assessments are an informal part of every lesson. Evaluations of lessons are recorded in the teacher's planning file to which every member of staff has access to if required.

Medium Term assessments are carried out termly. In Reception, pupils' progress is recorded within the trackers, this information tells us whether the child is on track or off track to reaching the end of year goals.

Long term assessments are carried out towards the end of the school year and measured against any previously set targets. Teacher assessment, statutory and other standardised measures, where applicable are used.

Assessment outcomes are analysed by class teachers and provide the focus for development within the year group for the coming year. Liaison with the next year group / key stage is vital to assist and secure continuity. At Hawthorn we share data regularly as a staff and give time to carry out detailed transition work with the Early Years Lead and Class Teacher and Year 1 teacher to ensure a smooth transition.

Parental Involvement and Reporting to Parents

At Hawthorn we value the partnership with parents and recognise that involvement is crucial in enhancing the quality and success of further learning. We endeavour to develop this partnership by:

- Making parents feel welcome in school, having an open-door policy on a morning and after school basis where the parents know they have time to settle their child and support them with their morning routine and speak with a member of the early years' team.
- Providing parents with the opportunity to discuss their child's progress, any worries or concerns, change in circumstances, and successes informally on a daily basis at the beginning and end of each day.
- Meeting with parents throughout the year for formal Parents' meeting to share what their child has achieved and what their next steps are. This also allows the parents to share any concerns or discuss progress.
- Sending newsletters home regularly to inform parents what we are teaching in school and inviting them to join in when appropriate.
- Providing regular curriculum workshops to show parents how they can help support their pupils' learning at home (maths, reading, phonics, writing, speech and language etc)
- Developing a range of systems to encourage parents to contribute to pupils' learning journals (My child was a star because, How I feel my child is doing, uploading or commenting on learning journals).
- Providing resources for families to enjoy at home.
- Inviting parents to join us on visits.
- Providing a written report at the end of the year.
- Encourage parents to access and follow the school's website.

Equal Opportunities

As a staff team, we endeavour to maintain an awareness of, and to provide for, equal opportunities for all pupils in The Foundation Stage. We take in to account cultural background, gender and any special need, both in our teaching attitudes and in the published materials we use with our pupils, including stories that have a diverse range of families, genders and races.

Pupils with Specific Needs (English as an Additional Language or Special Educational Needs)

Wherever possible, we aim to fully include all pupils in all lessons so that they benefit from listening and participating with others in demonstration, discussion and explanation.

Where necessary, teachers will, in consultation with the SENCO, draw up an individual plan for the child. Where appropriate, pupils may work on an individualised programme with support from specialist staff. Pupils may also receive targeted support within the classroom.

Specific planning to meet the needs of such pupils is identified in the teachers' short-term planning. This may take the form of simplified or modified tasks or the use of support staff.

Where appropriate, a group plan is developed with common objectives and learning targets for a group.

Reading

Pupils in Reception have a range of experiences of stories and are encouraged to develop their love of reading. We teach through a shared story linked to our class topic.

All pupils in Reception all have the opportunity to read a minimum of two times a week with the class teachers. The pupils have their reading books changed twice weekly and sent home with a reading log.

Homework

At the beginning of the year the pupils are given a pack to support their homework and learning at home. The pack contains:

- Homework book
- Number line to 20
- Phonics sound mat
- Laminated name card
- Reading record
- Reading books suitable to ability

A phonics video will be put onto Tapestry weekly, focussing on the letters and sounds taught in phonics that week. Parents are encouraged to support their child in joining in with the video. Homework is planned to consolidate or develop their understanding.

Clothing

We expect pupils to wear a school uniform every day. Your child can wear either a blue logo jumper or cardigan that can be ordered from the office. White polo shirts, school trousers and skirts can be either black or grey and they can be purchased from a variety of shops within the city. Velcro shoes that are sturdy to allow pupils to run, ride, climb and play safely are advised. Pupils in Reception participate weekly in P.E. and are provided with a school PE kit. No jewellery is to be worn for health and safety reasons.

Health and Safety

Emergency Contacts

During the application process we ask for at least two phone numbers so that we can contact parents, a family member or friend if a child has a serious accident or is ill in school. This information is recorded on the school admission form. We kindly ask that all parents inform the office if numbers change.

First Aid

First Aid is administered by practitioners with current First Aid qualifications. Minor injuries will be dealt with in school. Parents are contacted by telephone if their child has a more serious injury or becomes unwell. A written record of any injury is kept in school on the school system.

Toilet Accidents

We encourage parents to bring a spare change of clothes if they know their child has the occasional accident. We encourage and support pupils to use the toilet independently; however, spare clothes are available and parents are asked to wash and return any school items.

Medical Conditions

During the application process we ask parents to inform us of any medical conditions their child may have or problems with hearing, speech or vision. These are recorded on the school admissions form and they are asked to keep us up to date with any changes. Needs can be discussed in private through a parents meeting, which is booked before their child starts school.

Sickness

At Hawthorn we have a sickness policy where parents are asked to keep their pupils at home if their child has sickness such as vomiting or diarrhoea, and not to bring them to school until at least 48 hours after the last episode. This helps to reduce the risk of infection. All parents are encouraged to contact school in the morning whenever their child is too unwell to attend.

Arrangements to Collect Pupils

Parents are asked to collect their child on time to avoid anxiety or distress. If a parent or carer is late in picking up their child, they will be taken to a waiting area in the main reception. Staff will telephone using the contact phone number they have been provided. Emergency contact numbers will then be used if it is not possible to speak to the parents. If parents are unable to collect their child, they must let school know who will be collecting their child either by telling us at the beginning of the session or by telephoning the school. Alternatively, the person collecting the child will use their child's specific password; and if they cannot do so, a parent will be contacted. School rules state that pupils must be collected by a responsible person over the age **of 18 years**. If a child has not been collected and contact with the parents has not been able to be made, then the school may contact social services.

Food

All pupils in Reception have a snack time daily where there is a rota for fruit and vegetables; pupils are encouraged to try a piece.

Under the new government scheme, all pupils in Reception are entitled to a free school meal. Parents are invited in to sit with their child during one session to support their child and to learn more about school meals. Menus are handed out and available on the council website, displayed in the main reception and main hall.