



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

March 2022

‘The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences. We must widen the range of topics and goals, the types of situations we offer and their degree of structure, the kinds and combinations of resources and materials, and the possible interactions with things, peers, and adults.’

Loris Malaguzzi

Aims

Our aim is to prepare children for their futures by providing thoughtful, inspiring and challenging learning experiences within a nurturing, home-like and beautiful environment.

We want all our children to:

- become resilient, inquisitive, self-motivated learners and independent thinkers
- be happy and confident, with high self-esteem
- be excellent communicators who are able to express themselves, listen to others and make meaningful friendships and relationships
- have the skills to question, explore, theorise and make connections
- thrive within an environment that excites, inspires and creates a sense of awe and wonderment.

We want to ensure every child leaves our Early Years Foundation Stage happy and confident, with a genuine excitement for learning and the skills required to make a smooth and successful transition into Year 1.

Ethos

The approach to teaching and learning within the Early Years setting at Highgate Primary School is strongly influenced by the key principles of the ‘Reggio Emilia’ approach to education.

- We recognise that children have rights and, as such, are valued, listened to and given time and space to express themselves.
- We see children as constructors of knowledge, who are encouraged to be ‘researchers’. Children are therefore provided with opportunities to actively participate, explore, and question things.
- We have a very strong emphasis on the social development of children as part of a community and their relationships to other children, their families and teachers.
- We recognise the importance of expressive arts and understand that children use many different ways to express their understanding, thoughts and creativity. These different ways of thinking, exploring and learning are expressed through drawing, sculpting, music, dance and movement, painting, drama and play.
- We recognise the importance of the environment, which we consider to be ‘the third teacher’.

We also follow the principle, as set out in the document 'Birth to 5 Matters', that the path to significant learning is through recognising each child as unique, supporting them to develop positive relationships, and providing them with an enabling environment.

The learning environment

Great emphasis is placed on creating a learning environment, inside and out, that is welcoming, inspiring and calm, with plentiful stimulus for talking, using natural resources wherever possible. Children in the EYFS are able to move freely between outdoor and indoor spaces with resources, activities and provocations continually reviewed and refreshed following observations of children's engagement, behaviour, learning experiences and outcomes.

Classrooms

Our Early Years classrooms have defined areas with clearly labelled resources ensuring children can access them easily. Each classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences, activities and opportunities to explore all areas of learning. Classrooms have a writing area, maths area, creative area, book corner, role-play area, construction and small world area, direct access to the outdoor area, and a carpeted teaching area.

A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. Resources are provided and scenarios initiated to support children to explore and make sense of the world. These may take the form of artistic provocations, puppets, small-world figures or setting up of role-play areas, for example a post office, hospital or fairytale woodland cottage. All of these resources and activities provide opportunities for communication and create an environment that inspires oral language development.

Outdoor Areas

The outdoor area is a very important part of the learning environment with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for a maths game, reading and for construction.

High-quality and enticing resources and toys are set out that meet the needs and interests of all children and motivate discussion. Resources such as large, heavy items like wheelbarrows, community blocks or den building materials are selected to bring children together in collaborative enterprise.

Curriculum

At Highgate Primary School our curriculum is guided by the Statutory Framework for the EYFS, which specifies the areas of learning and development which an educational programme must cover, and the goals which most children are expected to reach by the end of Reception.

Areas of learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning, of which the three prime areas are particularly important for generating children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and to form relationships and thrive. They support children's learning in all other areas. The specific areas include essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society. The areas are listed in the table below.

Early Learning Goals:

The Statutory Framework lists the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) which the children are expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS. Each ELG relates to a sub-division of one of the areas of learning and development, and these are also listed in the table below. Our curriculum is structured to allow children to work towards, and achieve, the ELGs, in a progressive, supportive, child-friendly way.

Prime Areas	Specific Areas
Communication and Language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening, attention and understanding • Speaking 	Literacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension • Word reading • Writing
Personal, Social and Emotional Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-regulation • Managing self • Building relationships 	Mathematics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number • Numerical patterns
Physical Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross motor skills • Fine motor skills 	Understanding the World: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Past and present • People, culture and communities • The natural world
	Expressive Arts and Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating with materials • Being imaginative and expressive

The Characteristics of Effective Learning:

The Framework also sets out positive ways in which a child can engage with other people and their environment to underpin their overall learning and development and support them to remain an effective and motivated learner. Great emphasis is therefore given to the following areas:

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

Learning through play

Learning through play is an essential part of our curriculum. We provide children with stimulating, active and positive play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world, thinking creatively and critically, usually alongside other children. Through play, children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions, developing their oral skills. Adults within our setting take an active role in child-initiated play, observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

The Highgate Primary Curriculum

Our Early Years Curriculum has been developed from a good understanding of what excites and intrigues young children, whilst ensuring coverage of the essential areas of learning that will prepare them for their education ahead. It incorporates age-appropriate introductions to topics that will be experienced later on within the Highgate Primary Curriculum, using high quality texts as a starting point, with the flexibility to incorporate children's particular passions, interests and experiences. The Reception topics are 'Ourselves and our School', 'Into the Woods', 'Explorers and Adventurers', 'Amazing Animals', 'What a Performance' and 'Growing Up.'

Reading

Stories are an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, including both traditional and modern classics. There is always a whole-class story before going home, but also many opportunities to enjoy books at other times during the day, on their own, with friends, or with an adult. Every child in Reception also takes part in three

small-group guided reading sessions a week, using books which they can read using the knowledge they have already acquired through their phonics learning.

Phonics

Children in Nursery take part in regular planned activities to develop their phonic knowledge, including activities and games to support the development of sound discrimination, the identification of rhythms, rhymes and alliteration, and oral sound blending. Throughout Reception, and continuing into Year 1, the children take part in a daily whole-class phonics session, following the 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised' systematic synthetic phonics programme. They learn grapheme-phoneme (letter-sound) correspondences in a clearly defined sequence, and the skills of blending phonemes (sounds) to read words, and the reverse process, segmenting words into their constituent phonemes to begin to spell them when writing.

Writing

Throughout the EYFS, children are encouraged to practise mark-making and writing through independent activities planned as part of our continuous provision, gradually moving from early mark-making to being able to communicate their thoughts and ideas in writing with confidence and enthusiasm. In Reception, these skills are taught through short whole-class lessons and teacher-led small-group sessions. Children are encouraged to work independently, using their increasing phonic knowledge, but supported where necessary.

Maths

Nursery children's mathematical development is supported through use of stories and songs, as well as activities which may independent or with an adult. The focus is on early counting, understanding of number and building mathematical vocabulary. In Reception, the children take part in short daily whole-class sessions and teacher-led group work, as well as a range of activities, games and challenges, both indoors and out. We expect all children to develop a good understanding of numbers to 20 and positive attitudes to this important subject.

Visits and visitors

Visits play an important part in the curriculum. They take place within the local area and include regular trips to Highgate Wood, the school allotment, the local city farm and a children's theatre.

We encourage visitors to come into school, especially experts who can enhance a topic by talking to the children, for example a vet or an explorer. We often ask parents if they are able to share knowledge or a skill, such as introducing children to a cultural or religious festival, playing a musical instrument, cooking or running an art or craft activity or project.

Forest School

In the Spring and Summer terms, Reception children take part in a Forest School session in Highgate Wood (or on the school allotment) one afternoon every fortnight. The sessions are run by the class teacher, supported by parent volunteers. Forest School sessions develop children's appreciation of nature and promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent, imaginative and creative learners.

Performance

The EYFS children perform a Nativity at Christmas for parents and the wider school community, including users of our Family Centre. Each Reception class also performs a topic-based class assembly later in the year, providing further opportunity for children to build confidence, resilience and speaking skills.

Planning

Teachers' weekly plans reflect the half-termly topics and the EYFS learning objectives, but are flexible enough to ensure they also follow the children's interests, school themes and local or national events.

Each week, teachers in Reception plan English, maths and phonics lessons, using in-depth knowledge of each children. Plans include a short daily whole-class teaching session for each subject with clear learning objectives, a teacher-led focus group activity for English and maths, and reading groups linked to the phonics learning.

Nursery teachers similarly base their planning on observations of the children, providing a short daily whole-class group in the morning and another in the afternoon, as well as focus group activities throughout the day.

Continuous Provision

Continuous provision allows learning to continue without an adult being directly involved. Plans are written in both Nursery and Reception for all areas, inside and outside, with all members of the EYFS team contributing ideas and suggestions for resources and activities that provide enticing learning opportunities that inspire and challenge, rather than low-level consolidation of an existing skill. Excellent continuous provision enables children to independently explore the daily learning objectives, developing the skills and understanding necessary to achieve the Early Learning Goals.

The EYFS Day

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place, ensuring a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities across the day. Structured adult-led teaching and small groups are carefully planned activities which are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge, whereas it is through observing children's play that we see how much of this learning they have internalized and are able to deploy independently. The Reception day, and that for children attending full-time Nursery, runs from 9.00 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Morning Nursery children come from 9.00 a.m. until 12.00 p.m. and afternoon children from 12.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Much of the day is spent with children self-selecting tasks. At these times the interaction between adult and child is essential as it is the adult's response – modelling, questioning, hypothesizing – that builds understanding, guides new learning, and extends the child's own play.

In Reception, we also set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class or in small groups. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher and one another, taking turns to answer and contributing to discussions. As well as English, maths and phonics, whole-class teaching includes:

- Music - regular opportunities to sing and play a range of instruments
- Philosophy - opportunities to think, listen and share ideas
- PE - sessions in the gym with the school's sports coach
- Mandarin – introduction to Mandarin and Chinese culture through activities, songs, art, craft and calligraphy

Assessment

Assessment is an essential part of the teaching and learning cycle within the EYFS. It involves adults observing children to understand their level of development towards the Early Learning Goals, and their particular interests, allowing learning experiences for each child to be shaped accordingly. Assessment takes many forms:

Termly summative assessment

Throughout the early years, the class teacher submits end-of-term assessment data showing how well each child is progressing in each of the seven areas of learning and development. Termly Pupil Progress Meetings are held with the Headteacher and Inclusion Manager to discuss the children's progress and identify key areas of development for the class and for individual children.

Ongoing formative assessment

To enable the class teacher to plan appropriately for the children in the class, and to complete the termly summative assessment of each child's attainment, a range of formative assessment strategies are used throughout the EYFS. These include capturing children's significant achievements through photographs, brief spontaneous observation notes, objective-led observations and longer 'learning journeys' noting how a child plays and learns, how they use the learning environment and interact with other children and adults.

Parents are encouraged to contribute to ongoing assessment through the use of our Hurrah Cards. These are completed where significant learning or developmental events happen at home and are shared with the class.

Profile Books

We produce a Profile Book for each child in Nursery and Reception. This is a collection of the child's work, photographs of what they have done during the year, and a narrative written by the class teacher based on their observations of the child. Children spend time with the teaching team looking at and discussing their books and deciding what to add to them. Profile Books are also shared with parents throughout the year as both a record of, and a celebration of, their child's achievements. The books comprise a significant part of the child's annual report and is given to parents to keep at the end of the year.

Reception Baseline Assessments

This statutory assessment is carried out by each child with their class teacher within six weeks of their starting Reception. It consists of two series of activities, one related to language and the other to maths, the results of which are used by the Department for Education to judge how much progress each child makes over their time at primary school. These assessments may inform teacher judgements but do not replace the other formative and summative assessment processes outlined above.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

At the end of Reception, the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs), judging whether each ELG has been met to an 'expected' standard or is still being worked towards (described as 'emerging.') Children who have met all of the ELGs are assessed as having attained a Good Level of Development at the end of the EYFS. This information is shared with parents in the child's end-of-year report and is also passed on to the Year 1 teaching team to ensure the best transition possible into Key Stage One.

Pastoral care and partnership with parents

Role of adults

All staff within the EYFS are considered to be teachers, although one of the class teachers is the named key worker for each child in the setting. Adults work collaboratively to help children become familiar with the setting. They build a relationship with parents to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. All adults actively seek to form positive, respectful relationships with the children in their care and to support their learning and development.

Partnership with parents

We ensure parents are actively involved with their child's education, supporting families to feel welcome and comfortable in our setting, and encouraging parents to feel they can always speak to us about their child. As well as parent consultation evenings each term, we offer information sessions for parents, such as presentations on how we teach phonics and how we read with children. We encourage parents to volunteer to help on trips, support Forest School sessions in Highgate Wood or the allotment, run an art project, share a religious or cultural celebration with the children, or simply come in to read a story to the class.

Home Learning

Once settled in, children in Reception take a reading book home each week and are also set an eBook, linked to their phonics learning, which they can read to their parents. From the second half of the Autumn Term, they are given a short homework task designed to consolidate learning from the week and provide parents with an insight into what the children have been exploring in school. We expect Reception parents to support their children with homework, read to and hear their child read regularly, and send us a comment each week in their child's reading record.

Keeping Children Safe

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance, as set out in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Healthy Eating

We promote healthy eating at school and provide fruit or vegetables, milk and an afternoon snack of freshly-baked bread. All children in Reception and in full-time Nursery eat an excellent and healthy school lunch, prepared and cooked on site by the school chef and kitchen team. We aim to recreate the supportive and caring experience of a family meal, model good eating habits and promote good manners. Teaching staff serve the children before eating alongside them.

Toileting

We encourage all children to start Nursery without nappies but will support any children struggling with this. All our EYFS classrooms have clean and well cared-for toilet facilities. We support children to use the toilet independently, but acknowledge that young children often have 'accidents'. Where necessary we work with families to implement a toileting plan. We have stocks of spare clothes and change anyone who needs it, using the open area of the toilets, outside the cubicles.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

EYFS staff follow the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy. Any concerns about a child's development are discussed at an early stage with parents and with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo). We strongly encourage parents to share with us any concerns they may have with regard to their child's development.

Extended services

Children in both Nursery (after a settling-in period) and Reception are able to participate in our Early Birds breakfast club and Night Owls after-school club. There is a charge for both clubs, which have a dedicated EYFS service. Children in part-time Nursery also have the opportunity to pay for additional hours including, where applicable, a school lunch.

Links to other Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Charging Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Policy on Intimate Care and Use of Touch
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Transition Policy

Procedures for policy monitoring and dissemination

The policy statement will be reviewed every four years by the Governors' Curriculum Committee, and all members of staff and governors will receive access to it. Copies are available to parents on request and on the school website.

Staff Responsible for policy Implementation

Co Headteacher	William Dean
Co Headteacher	Rebecca Lewis
Leader of EYFS	Kate Imeson