



Caring **A**chieving **R**espectful **E**xciting

Early Years Policy

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Introduction

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Head teacher and all staff working with children in our school.

Within this document, the term Early Years Foundation Stage is used to describe children who are in our Nursery and Reception classes.

Aims

At Hardwick Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We recognise that a child's experiences between birth and age five have a significant impact on their future life chances. As part of our practice we aim to:

- Provide a curriculum which promotes the 'Early Learning Goals'
- Provide quality learning experiences, both indoor and outdoor, for all the children. Learning will be through practical and play activities, which are structured, balanced and meet the individual needs and interests of the children.
- Provide a curriculum which takes account of, and responds to, the children's developmental needs, their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure, stimulating environment and allows them to make progress related to their differing abilities.
- Provide a curriculum which provides equal learning and development opportunities for all the children, including those with English as a second language, looked after children, and those with Special Educational needs.
- Develop children's vocabulary and ability to express themselves in home language and English language.
- Develop the moral and social values of the children through Hardwick Primary School's Care Code and our SMSC whole school vision.
- Ensure the children have positive experiences of success at their own levels in order to give them confidence and motivation for learning in the future.
- Foster positive home school links with parents to support and enhance children's development and understanding.

We adhere to the statutory framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
 - Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
 - Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
 - **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**
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Implementation

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning.
- Promote equality of opportunity, providing early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated.
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors.
- In Nursery, have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. All of the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three 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 the prime areas:

- Communication and Language (CL)
- Physical Development (PD)
- Personal, Emotional and Social Development (PSED)

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which these prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills all children need to develop and learn effectively and become 'School Ready'. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years at Hardwick Primary and grow in confidence and ability within the prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group **sessions** which increase as they progress through the EYFS, with times for a daily phonics lesson and the teaching and learning of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered through a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS statutory framework:

“Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.”

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, practitioners interact to facilitate, stretch and challenge children further. We believe that child initiated learning (CIL), both indoors and outdoors, is the fundamental way in which young children learn. CIL can be enjoyed and challenging. When playing, children behave in different ways. Sometimes, their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, and sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play. Through play, children will be developing skills across all the prime and specific areas of learning, working towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our teaching and learning. The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin the EYFS environment and provision. They guide and support the ways in which we create learning spaces, and how we teach:

Playing and exploring (engagement)

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning (motivation)

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically (thinking)

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

The above Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin daily provision and practice in the EYFS environment. They have been characterised and designed by an illustrator so they are accessible by children and practitioners. They coincide with the whole-school's *Learning to Learn* ethos, SMART, and are displayed and referred to in daily practice. The emphasis is on *how* children learn, not simply *what* they learn.

Entitlement

To fulfill the legal requirements of the Early Years Development Matters document, teachers will ensure that:

- all children have sustained periods of child initiated time (CIL) to develop, extend and consolidate their learning. Adults may intervene during CIL to develop vocabulary, ask questions and teach new skills or concepts. Adults will plan and source resources to support children's play according to their interests.

The children in Foundation Stage have several daily teaching inputs from an adult in small targeted groups.

All children in Foundation Stage take part in adult-lead daily physical skills sessions, to help improve their coordination and strengthen core muscles. Activities are planned to support and develop gross and fine motor skills including palmar grip, shoulder pivot, elbow pivot and wrist pivot. In addition, 'Dough Disco' sessions help children to strengthen their hands, preparing them to write. We also use the School's Trim Trail to encourage children to challenge themselves to improve climbing, balancing and jumping from larger equipment.

Reception children receive daily Maths sessions, handwriting and phonics sessions, alongside weekly Guided Reading sessions.

Reception children are provided with a Writing Journal. The books are not intended for 'formal' use. Instead their purpose is to record and showcase key milestones achieved in the specific areas of the Early Years curriculum.

Environment

A stimulating learning environment, which offers high quality continuous provision is key to supporting children's learning and development. Three types of provision are in place in the EYFS setting at Hardwick:

- **Basic Provision** – resources linked to 'expected' ages and stages of development or historical knowledge of cohorts
- **Continuous provision** – resources linked to current assessments that have been levelled to match the attainment and learning preferences of the current cohort
- **Enhanced provision (object or prompt)** – areas of provision that have been enhanced with objects or prompts that support and interest or encourage investigation and questioning.

Hardwick Primary School follows the principals of Elizabeth Jarman's *Communication Friendly* spaces. The **physical environment** should:

- Be organised and emphasise open space
- Have clearly defined learning areas
- Have clearly labelled learning areas (pictures/words)
- Have space for 'privacy' (both inside and outdoors)

- Have book specific areas
- Have literacy specific areas
- Have mathematics specific areas
- Have learning resources/materials that are labelled with pictures/words
- Have resources that are available for free play and easily reached by the children
- A designated role play area (both inside and outdoors)
- Have access to musical instruments/noise makers
- Have good quality toys, small world objects and real/natural resources

Display boards should be backed in uniformed neutral colours. Displays should motivate, celebrate and/or teach. Print within the environment should be carefully planned (environments should be 'print-rich as opposed to 'full of print'). Photographs of children's learning will be used to support the egocentricity of children in the Early Years, with children having the opportunity to respond and engage in their learning.

There is a designated Maths and Exciting Writing Working Wall, incorporating photographs of learning, completed work and Next Step comments. Practitioners will keep a running record to ensure that every child's learning is displayed during an academic year. There is also a designated Theme board, titled 'Our Learning Journey'.

Assessment

As part of our daily practice, we follow the 'Observe, assess, plan' process from Development Matters, to inform our future plans.



Adults will observe children informally during CIL, gathering evidence of children's achievements, their interest, preferred areas of play and level of development through notes and photographs. This ensures that children can demonstrate a skill or concept independently and consistently in a variety of everyday situations. Information gained through observations will be shared with parents, other school staff and outside agencies as appropriate. Adults collate notes and photographs through the use of an assessment program called *2Build a Profile (2Simple)*, which links directly to Development Matters. Directed Time for teachers and teaching assistants is used for twice weekly learning conversations, based around individual children, groups and the cohort, including analysis of the learning environment. This will be before teacher's PPA so next steps can be effectively targeted. This will help to plan effective and targeted changes.

Practitioners will carry out summative assessments during whole-school assessment weeks, collating all observations in 2Simple and other formative assessments. A Gap and Strength Analysis (GSA) will then be completed to identify areas of strength and learning gaps. This will be used to help create appropriate learning environments and interventions.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is completed at the end of the Reception year. Staff completing the profile will attend annual moderation meetings. Staff observe children during adult led teaching sessions, and change sessions to make them easier or harder where appropriate, but most evidence for assessment is taken from Child Initiated Learning time. Children's work during Child Initiated Learning time shows adults what children are confident to do independently as they apply skills taught.

Timetable

EYFS at Hardwick Primary does not follow a rigid or 'set-in-stone' timetable. The timetable is fluid and will evolve termly in order to meet and support the needs and strengths of the children from formative and summative assessments. The timetable, however, must ensure a good balance between adult-lead and child-initiated teaching and learning. There will be:

- Opportunities for directed teaching
- Opportunities for teaching through continuous provision
- Opportunities to observe, assess and support children's learning
- Time to talk to children to find out what interests and motivates them

The daily timetable will include:

- Adult-directed taught time (phonics, maths and literacy in Reception; phonics maths/or literacy in Nursery)
- Intervention time to support physical development/communication and language
- Allocated carpet time (story, songs, interest session)

Reception will operate 'free-play' snack time, with an allocated member to over-see the provision. Children will be encouraged to self-serve their drinks. Hardwick Primary recognises snack-time as an invaluable opportunity to develop social skills and self-care. There will be opportunities for children to talk, listen and understand through the use of 'interest talk' time prompts. There will be targeted intervention for children that would benefit from small-group snack-time. In Nursery, snack-time will be organised in small keyworker groups. More able children will have the opportunity to self-serve. Sessions will teach the importance of hand-washing and early manners. Snacks will be presented in a picnic basket with a blanket for comfortable sitting and prompt cards to remind children of snack routine e.g. good sitting.

During CIL, the classrooms will operate 'free-play' to the outside environment. Children will be equipped with wellington boots during bad weather. Parents will be informed about the importance of outside play during transition meetings and parent workshops so they are encouraged to provide suitable clothing during winter months.

Transition

Transitions are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. We **strive** to ensure that parents and carers feel well informed about and comfortable with all transitions in their child's life by:

- Holding a 'welcome meeting' to all new parents/families in Nursery and Reception
- Holding 1:1 induction meetings to support the completion of paperwork
- Providing supporting documentation (key information about the school)

Home visits are held for all Nursery and Reception new starters. Effective information gathering is vital: home visits will focus on informal observations of the child and their environment. Key questions will ascertain the child's:

- Medical history
- Self-care needs e.g still in nappies
- Home language proficiency
- Parents' home language proficiency
- Home learning environment e.g. bedtime reading
- 'Holistic' overview e.g. likes and dislikes

Children will have the opportunity to draw a picture so gross and fine motor skills can be assessed. Where possible, children will be asked to 'talk' about their drawing so a speech sample can be taken. Parents will also be asked to complete a Universal Speaking Assessment in home language. Support from the New Communities Team will be provided, if needed.

Visits to local Nurseries will be arranged to support information gathering, if possible.

Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. At present, the school runs eight days of transition in Reception and six days in Nursery. A gradual timetable is implemented across both year groups:

Nursery:

- x3 Stay and Play Sessions (parent and child) – one hour each
- x3 Child Stay sessions – one hour each

Reception:

- x5 Morning sessions
- x3 Morning and Lunchtime sessions

All parents will be provided with a visual information pack, titled:

- Helping your child to become Nursery Ready
- Helping your child to become Reception Ready

Hardwick Primary School also ensures that transition from Reception to Year 1 is not overlooked. During the Summer 2 term before transition, Year 1 teachers spend some designated time in Reception, observing children in their familiar environment and observing practice. Reception and Year 1 teachers will also meet to discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Key Stage 1. This discussion helps Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Partnership with parents and the wider context

At Hardwick Primary School we strive to create and maintain a strong partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care by:

- Inviting them into school three times a year to discuss their child's progress.
- Inviting them to curriculum events/workshops.
- Giving clear information about what to expect in EYFS.
- Encouraging them to come in and support in the classroom.
- Offering brief end of day 'open door' sessions to address any issues regarding their child.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Supporting learning at home

Hardwick Primary School recognises the importance of home reading, especially in the Early Years. From Spring, there is a weekly parent-child library session in Nursery, facilitated by staff. Children will be provided with picture books to take home on a weekly basis, with the emphasis being on 'adult reading' (or discussion of the images to support and develop early language for illiterate parents).

In Reception, all children are provided with a home reading book and Home Reading Record. Reading Records are monitored by staff to ensure regular reading at home (at least three times a week).

'At Home Challenges' will be set in Nursery and Reception on a weekly basis to allow children to share and consolidate their learning. Parents are actively encouraged to support and work alongside their child at home. Examples in Nursery might be:

- Open-ended activities to encourage creativity and 'play'
- Descriptions or suggested activities to develop understanding of a skill or concept
- Mark Making
- Communication in Print vocabulary support
- 'TALK' tasks/challenges

Examples in Reception might be all of the above, plus:

- Handwriting sheets
- Key Word practice
- Phonics (reading and spelling)
- Maths

Expectations

By the end of Nursery, a good level of development is working within age 30-50 months.

By the end of Reception, a good level of development is working within 40-60+ months and “expected” in Early Learning Goals.

Reporting to Parents

Parents will be invited to attend parents evening to discuss children’s progress once a term. They will also receive a EYFS report at the end of Nursery and Reception which comments on all areas of learning and the characteristics of learning.

Special Education Needs

Our school aims to provide a broad and balanced education for all children. Through our teaching in the Foundation Stage we provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of all children and that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child’s different needs. This will enable children with learning and/or physical difficulties to take an active part in learning and practical activities and investigations and to achieve the goals they have been set. Some children will require closer supervision and more adult support to allow them to progress whilst more able children will be extended through differentiated activities. By being given enhancing and enriching activities, more able children will be able to progress to a higher level of knowledge and understanding appropriate to their abilities.

Equal Opportunities

At Hardwick Primary School we are committed to providing all children with an equal entitlement to the Early Years curriculum through activities and opportunities regardless of race, gender, culture or class. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Health and Safety

All staff should make themselves conversant with all relevant risk assessments and the Health and Safety policy for (school). Where appropriate reminders will be given to children about potential hazards and risks involved during activities they are undertaking. It is the responsibility of teachers to teach the safe use of (tools and) equipment and insist on good practice and follow proper procedures for activities (safety and hygiene). Before attending any visits or inviting visitors into school to support the learning, staff will ensure all necessary risk assessments and safeguarding procedures have been completed.

Teachers will make sure that:

- risks have been assessed carefully before carrying out any practical activities with clear expectations given to children on procedures and safe working.
- children are encouraged to clean up after themselves and respect the resources they are using.

Staff ratios

The DfE says that ratios of staff to pupils specified in the EYFS framework apply at all times, including breaks and lunchtimes. To ensure children are safe and their needs can be met adult to child ratios should be as follows:

For children aged three and over in maintained Nursery classes in maintained schools (except in Reception classes), the requirement is that:

- There must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children
- At least one member of staff must be a 'school teacher'
- At least one member of staff must hold a relevant level-3 qualification

The required presence of a 'school teacher' is an addition to the 2012 statutory framework. However, the revised EYFS does not change the position on breaks, short-term absence and non-contact time.

The minimum ratio (one member of staff for every 13 children) must be maintained, but teachers are not necessarily required to be present during breaks and lunchtimes.

Headteachers should exercise their professional judgement in determining what cover is required.

Staff to pupil ratios at breaks for children outside the EYFS:

The DfE does not set a minimum supervision ratio for breaks and lunchtimes for pupils who are no longer in the EYFS. This includes reception classes in which the majority of children will reach the age of five, six, or seven during the course of the school year.

The number and type of staff (teachers, teaching assistants or midday supervisors) on duty at any one time should be determined after a risk assessment. There is no specific requirement for staff on duty to be qualified teachers or support staff with certain qualifications. However, this should be taken into account in the risk assessment.

For other Key Stages, and in most Reception classes, the number of staff on duty should be determined by a risk assessment.

| Age | Under 1 | 1 | 2 | 3+ |
|--|---------|-----|-----|-------------|
| England (current ratios) | 1:3 | 1:3 | 1:4 | 1:8 or 1:13 |
| England (proposed ratios where there are high quality staff) | 1:4 | 1:4 | 1:6 | 1:8 or 1:13 |

Staff Development

Identified training needs of individuals or whole staff will be supported by the provision of in-service courses and training, within school, with the LA or by other providers. Foundation Stage staff attend regular sessions at the HUB, which provides training and up to date information regarding the foundation stage curriculum. This is hosted by members of the Derby Early Years Teaching schools.

Key Resources

We have a wide range of resources to support the teaching of all areas of learning in the Foundation stage. We keep these in labelled drawers, the garage on the Reception playground and in toy cupboard. Both classrooms are well equipped with shelving. It is the responsibility of all Foundation Stage staff to ensure these resources are tidy, accessible to children and safe and fit for purpose.

Role of the Phase Leader

1. To provide a strategic lead and direction for Foundation Stage in the school;
2. To take the lead in policy development and the production, review and revision of schemes of work to ensure progression and continuity;
3. To keep up to date with developments in the Early Years curriculum and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate;
4. To support colleagues, answering queries, giving assistance with any additional planning as required;
5. To take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources;
6. To monitor progress across the foundation stage in all areas of learning and advise the Head teacher on action needed;
7. To monitor and evaluate the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching and adult interactions with children in the foundation stage.
8. To report to the Governing body on the progress and achievement in the foundation stage.
9. Organise opportunities education experiences, including visits into school from professionals and external visits.
10. To identify, with support of staff, children who are gifted and talented in all area of learning and provide opportunities for their development.

Monitoring Arrangements

The Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of the EYFS Framework and monitors this through the Foundation Stage leader's evaluation reports, visits and observations in classrooms, work scrutiny and through planning files to see that evaluation informs future learning.

The Governors are part of the formation of the initial policy and the Headteacher/subject leader reports to them annually through the school's Self-Evaluation procedures to inform them of how and to what standard the requirements of the EYFS Curriculum are being delivered.

Appendix 1

What is Child Initiated Learning? (CIL)

Child Initiated Learning is about children having opportunities and time to develop their play and interests. Adults may intervene to extend children's thinking or introduce new knowledge. Within Child Initiated Learning children are able to extend and apply what they have been taught. Children apply the knowledge and skills they gain from other areas of learning in a context which is meaningful to them. They are encouraged to explore, take risks, make decisions, solve problems and share their achievements with others. Child Initiated Learning promotes language development while children constantly talk about what they are doing. During child initiated learning children also develop concentration, perseverance, and the ability to work collaboratively, which can be applied to all the learning that takes place in school, at home and in all aspects of life.

How do we do 'Child Initiated Learning'?

The inside environment is carefully planned to support Child initiated learning. It has different areas of learning.....the Construction Area, the Reading corner, the Writing table, the Maths area, the Investigation area, the Jigsaw area, the Water tray, the Role Play area, the play dough area, the creative area, iPads, 'Write the room' clipboards. Each area has a challenge for children to complete independently but the children also have the opportunity to follow their own interests with a wide range of resources they can access independently in each area.

The children also have time outside everyday, where again there are different areas for the children to develop their learning. Our Foundation Stage outdoor area is fully enclosed and safe for all our children.