



# Early Years and Foundation Policy

## Holmer Lake Primary School

<b>Policy- Document Status</b>			
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*“ Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”*

**‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021.’**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

At Holmer Lake Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebrating success, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

The EYFS is based upon three characteristics of effective learning:

**1. Playing and exploring** – engagement

This involves the children: Finding out and exploring, playing with what they know and being willing to ‘have a go.’

**2. Active learning** – motivation

This involves the children: Being involved and concentrating, keeping trying and enjoying achieving what they set out to do.

**3. Creating and thinking critically** – thinking

This involves the children: Having their own ideas, making links and choosing ways to do things.

These characteristics of effective learning are developed and achieved through three prime areas of learning and four specific areas of learning. These are categorised as follows:

**Three prime areas of learning:**

- Communication and language.
- Physical development.
- Personal, social and emotional development.

Additionally there are **four specific areas of learning:**

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most

children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

At Holmer Lake we aim to provide motivating first-hand experiences to enable children to learn more and remember more. Our EYFS curriculum is designed to ensure planned progression in children's cognitive development alongside their personal, social and emotional progress. Our curriculum has been adapted alongside the "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021" to create a systematic and sequential development of children's knowledge and skills. We have created a broad and rich curriculum that enables children to achieve their Early Learning Goals (ELG's), with the flexibility to adapt based on their fascinations. Children have access to a range of opportunities and resources linked to all 7 areas of development both inside and outside.

We aim to:

- Provide a curriculum that offers children a wide range of opportunities ensuring that we do not expect children to aspire to things they have never encountered.
- We will work on broadening their experiences providing opportunities to try new things and encouraging them to relish a new challenge.
- Provide high expectations encouraging them to develop independence and creative thinking.
- Provide a learning environment that helps children achieve their potential and support those who need additional help.

### **The Learning Environment**

At Holmer Lake Primary School the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by adult observation of the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom both inside and out is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources. We encourage the children to become independent in choosing and using their own equipment and resources for play and in developing their own learning. The children have access to outdoor learning throughout the day. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. Activities and resources are provided for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all areas of learning.

### **Curriculum Implementation**

Our curriculum follows the Early Years Statutory Framework and we have created a long-term plan based around Development Matters 2022 and Birth to 5. We have used 'Golden Threads' to ensure key concepts are visited and to build foundations for future learning in KS1. Our curriculum outlines clear aspects of knowledge that need to be taught. Clear progression routes have been planned over 3 terms to show how children will meet the ELG statements at the end of the summer term.

Pupils learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult directed activities and challenges. We have high expectations for all children using Nrich, Number sense and Read Write Inc to enhance provision in maths and early reading, the weekly timetable is carefully structured so that children get rigorous direct teaching in Phonics, mathematics, and writing (through the implementation of

Drawing Club). We also ensure regular session for Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and topic linked to Understanding of the World (UW) and Expressive Arts and Design (EAD).

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and thinking critically and creatively and this takes place both indoors and in our outdoor area. Our outdoor area is open all year round and in all but the most challenging weather conditions. Children make their own decisions about where they learn best and teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all areas of learning both inside and outside. Children are given time for sustained deep learning through continuous provision sessions where they can work creatively and apply their learning skills. During this time adults use high quality interactions to support children and move their learning on.

The children's learning goes regularly beyond the classroom with weekly sessions in "Forest School", local walks to the library and local lake. Visitors to the classroom, such as dental health nurses and the local community police, promote children's personal development and understanding of how to stay safe and healthy.

We provide effective and focused intervention for those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Our EYFS curriculum has been developed using both Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters, as well as considering what we want children to know when they finish reception ready for Year 1 and beyond.

These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning. Some of the weekly planning is based on the ideas and the assessed needs of the children, building on their achievements and interests.

Regular assessments of children's learning are made; this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's learning journey books or Seesaw.

We use pen portraits to record and track a child's development across the EYFS, identifying whether they are emerging or expected at various assessment points in the year. Children in need of extra support are identified and appropriate interventions are put into place. In the final term of the EYFS, a written summary is given to parents, reporting their child's progress. Data is analysed to look for patterns and trends. This information informs the School Development Plan. Information is also shared with the children's Year 1 teachers to help ensure a smooth transition into the National Curriculum.

### **Baseline assessment**

Our approach to baseline assessment ensures that we get an accurate picture of each child. On entry to the EYFS children complete their Reception Baseline Assessment within the first 6 weeks. The children are also assessed against a baseline pen portrait through a variety of observations and adult directed activities. Information is also gathered from previous provisions and settings, as well as from home visits and discussions with parents. Entry data is entered onto Insight.

### **Parents as Partners**

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children.

The partnership is achieved by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts school and nursery. Parents invited to complete a questionnaire about their child's needs and current development as part of home visits.
- Inviting children to spend time with their teacher prior to starting school during our "Induction Sessions."
- Parents are invited to attend an EYFS induction where the Head Teacher and Foundation stage teacher explain the curriculum.
- A stay and play session every Friday 8.40-9.00 where parents can come and play with their child.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents. For example, OPAL events, RWI workshops, story telling sessions
- Home/school communication books are used to provide a link between home and the setting. Ideas on how parents can help their child at home are shared in the book.
- Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher about any concerns they may have.
- Shortly after starting school parents of children in Reception are invited to discuss progress in private with the teacher and review their child's work.
- Parents receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the academic year.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the class teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children within the EYFS, and is supported by Teaching Assistants.

We have good links with feeder nurseries and other provisions. The EYFS teacher meets with staff to discuss the new intake of children prior to them starting school. These visits provide the opportunity to discuss individual needs and to meet the children within the pre-school environment.

### **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children are treated fairly, regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We provide every child the opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS we set realistic but challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. This is achieved by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;

- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children’s learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children’s progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children within boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We offer children choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See our Safeguarding Children Policy)

### **Welfare**

“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.”

At Holmer Lake Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We meet all these requirements.

### **Positive Relationships**

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### **The SMARTER code**

In Reception there is a clear emphasis on developing children’s understanding of the whole school SMARTER code.

Children following the SMARTER code are celebrated through collecting Smarter Code stickers, star of the week and winning the Smarter Cup.

**Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of all EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and phase leader will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.