



Hartsbourne Primary School
Mission statement: Valuing Potential; Creating Opportunities

EARLY YEARS POLICY

POLICY REVIEW

DATE OF POLICY:	SEPTEMBER 2024	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	SEPTEMBER 2027
MONITORED BY:	JULIE DURRANT-PATEL	FULL GOVERNING BODY	

VISION

Community	Happy Memories	Confidence	Aspirations
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We aim to be a school where the children are at the centre of everything that we do. Decisions that we make around the curriculum and school life are carefully considered to reflect the current needs of the children. Mental health is balanced with their academic needs to nurture the whole child.

We strive to provide a fun, inclusive and nurturing environment for children to learn, through challenging lessons with an emphasis on progress and achievement. The curriculum design will be broad and ambitious and provide opportunities for the children to learn about the wider world around them. We aim for them to see themselves within the topics and themes that we choose but also to enhance their awareness and understanding of those who are different from them.

Our outside space is extensive and well resourced. We believe that outdoor provision provides opportunities for children to build the characteristics of effective learning which enables them to achieve across the curriculum.

The strong community of our school is built upon the relationships between all staff, children and parents. By the time our children leave Hartsbourne we believe that they will be confident, inquisitive learners who will have lifelong happy memories. The skills they develop will enable them to overcome any challenges that they meet and prepare them for secondary school and beyond.

RATIONALE

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to five years old, when they reach the end of their reception year. Key Stage 1 begins when children move into Year 1. At Hartsbourne we greatly value the important role that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that the EYFS is important in its own right and plays an integral role in preparing children for life and not simply the next stage in their education.

In the EYFS, children learn best through carefully planned, developmentally appropriate, play-based activities. Through play, children explore and make sense of their world. They practise new skills, build and construct their understanding, and have the opportunity to think creatively. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems, discuss and negotiate plans, and learn about how to manage their behaviour. They become independent learners and thinkers.

At Hartsbourne, we aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to fulfil their potential. All children begin school with a wide range of skills, and having experienced many different learning opportunities. It is the privilege of practitioners working in nursery and reception to support children as they build upon their prior knowledge. It is essential that parents/carers, support staff and the nursery and reception staff team work effectively together to scaffold children's learning and development.

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five' (DFE 2023):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1170108/EYFS_framework_from_September_2023.pdf

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To provide a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment, which meets individual needs and interests of the children, and in which creativity is valued.
- To develop warm and secure relationships between children and adults.
- To provide a high-quality curriculum in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2023).
- To encourage all children to become self-motivated and independent learners with a positive attitude to learning and self-discipline.
- For children to become aware of moral and social values, and for children to value the cultural diversity within our school and community.
- To foster strong, home-school links and share a common sense of purpose with parents.

CURRICULUM

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following four overarching principles:

- 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 (see "the characteristics of effective teaching and learning" at paragraph 1.15) and at different rates.

“The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.” (DFE p.6).

The content of the curriculum must include provision across seven areas. The ‘Prime Areas’:

- Communication and language (CL);
- Physical development (PD);
- Personal, social and emotional development (PSED).

And the ‘Specific Areas’:

- Literacy (L);
- Mathematics (M);
- Understanding the world (UW);
- Expressive arts and design (EAD).

In addition, our curriculum and provision is carefully planned to reflect the different ways in which children learn, reflecting the three ‘Characteristics of Learning’ set out in the document as follows:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’;
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements;
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things” (DFE p.16).

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are of equal importance and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated play activities. Within each of these areas are the steps which show the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need to learn during the EYFS in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) by the end of their reception year.

In addition to the daily physical activities on offer in the planned environment, children in reception also have a planned PE lesson once each week, using the Get Set for 4 PE scheme.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Environment

At Hartsbourne we aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through play. We aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence and be ‘in charge’ of their own learning.

In both nursery and reception, equal opportunities for learning are planned across the inside and outside environments. The nursery classroom has a dedicated and secure outdoor area, divided into paved and soft surface areas with shading provided by hedging and trees. The Reception classroom opens onto a fenced outdoor area comprising of both concrete and faux grass surfaces with large trees providing shade. There is also a canopy covering

approximately a third of the outside space, ensuring that children can access outside opportunities in most weather conditions.

Each week, both nursery and reception make use of the wider outdoor school environment as part of their planned timetables, including visits to the nature reserve. Other activities such as using the astro-turf, playing field and 'wellie walks' area carefully planned to fit in with each classes curriculum.

Inside each classroom, the environment is divided into a range of different areas, for example role play, book corner, writing area, malleable materials, art areas and construction. Outside, the space is used more fluidly, however opportunities for sand, water, role play, creative activities, and physical activities are always available. Children are encouraged to be independent learners and limits may be placed on the numbers of children who can use an area at one particular time, ensuring safety and comfort for all.

Play

At Hartsbourne, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Research shows that children who are taught formally too soon, while showing initial progress, are later disadvantaged. We ensure that we plan an exciting environment inside and outdoors and allow children time to explore in a way that most interests them.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

We believe that parents are children's first and most enduring educators. We also believe that when parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning.

Parents have a central role in supporting the child's learning at school. A successful partnership needs a two-way flow of information, knowledge and skills. We aim to achieve positive and useful relationships with the parents of the children in our care by:

- Offering each family a 'connection visit' before their child starts nursery, either at school or at home.
- Inviting parents of Reception children to attend a welcome meeting before their child starts school.
- Collecting information from parents about children's previous learning experiences, and other relevant information.
- Keeping parents informed about the coming terms work by sending home copies of timetables and curriculum information.
- Keeping parents informed about school and class events through weekly letters on Google Classroom and notices in the classroom window.
- Inviting parents to engage in a range of school activities, for example listening to children read in class, joining us on class trips, helping with specific activities in class, Friends of Hartsbourne etc.
- Giving parents regular access to children's learning journals on Tapestry, a minimum of once every half-term.

Parents are informed of their child's class teacher in the summer term before their child starts school. Children will be offered an opportunity to meet their class teacher and teaching assistants towards the end of the summer term.

INCLUSION

Hartsbourne Primary School is an inclusive school which offers a broad, balanced and creative curriculum which aims to encourage all children to achieve their full potential, including children with SEND. Our Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) is Lucy Lee. If a child's progress in any prime or specific area of learning gives cause for concern, we will discuss this with the SENCO and the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child. Further details can be found in the following whole school policies:

- Special Education Needs and Disability Policy and Information Report
- The Accessibility Plan
- The Equality Policy

OBSERVATION, ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING

Observation is the most valuable assessment tool available to practitioners in the EYFS. Practitioners in our nursery and reception class make daily observations of children engaged in child-initiated play, making notes, recording children's conversations and comments, as well as taking photographs. Assessments are also used to ensure that future planning reflects the individual interests and needs of the children in the class. All the observations collected during the EYFS are recorded on individual children's Tapestry Online Journal. Updates to these are made available at the end of each half-term and before each parent's evening meeting.

Throughout the year, observations and assessments help inform class teachers to ensure children are meeting developmental milestones, along with expected progress. At the end of the Reception year, the children are assessed against the statutory EYFS Profile, for each of the 17 Early Learning Goals. Children who reach age-related expectations in communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development, literacy and maths, are considered to have a Good Level of Development (GLD). Those who are working toward expectations are 'emerging' and those working at age related expectations are 'expected'.

From September 2021, each Reception child has been assessed using the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of them starting school. This is used to assess how well schools have supported children between the beginning of their Reception year and the end of Year 6.