



HIGHER OPENSHAW COMMUNITY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS) POLICY

Ratified by the Governing Body in: **MARCH 2016**

Next Review: **MARCH 2017**



Introduction

At Higher Openshaw Community School (HOCS) we believe that Early Years Education lays down the firm foundations on which to build all future learning. It is a holistic education encompassing supportive ways to strengthen and deepen all learning and development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year and is based upon four themes:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

At HOCS we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally in order to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's social, emotional and educational needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special and develop individually, in different ways and at varying rates
- Implementing a sensitive 'Settling In and Transitional' programme that enables children to feel happy and secure
- Providing a happy, safe and welcoming environment where children learn and their families feel welcomed, establishing and maintaining good relationships as partners
- Fostering positive attitudes to learning, trust, confidence, curiosity, responsibility and independence, supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, varying cultures, beliefs and opinions
- Providing opportunities for children to make choices and become independent in their learning, in a stimulating, safe environment, using a rich and play based curriculum
- Providing experiences which build on: children's' existing knowledge and understanding, their personal interests and areas of curiosity, (producing independent children with the natural desire, excitement and motivation to learn)
- Supporting individual children's learning and development needs, which encompasses both indoors and outdoors learning experiences.
- Fostering and nurturing the development of a child's self-identity and understanding of their role within the communities in which they live, work and play
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways, developing their understanding of social skills. (Includes working within the codes of behaviour and following our school 'Behaviour Policy')
- Treating children as individuals and ensure each has equality of opportunity, whatever their gender, ethnicity, abilities or special educational needs
- Using assessment and record keeping based on direct observations and discussions, which builds on prior learning and informs future planning

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

In 2012 the statutory document 'The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework' became mandatory for all early years providers.

The EYFS Framework explains how and what children will be learning to support their healthy development. There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the educational curriculum in the Early Years. All 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, the **PRIME** areas of learning are:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication and Language**
- **Physical Development**

The other four areas of learning are called **SPECIFIC** areas of learning. Through these specific areas the prime areas of learning are strengthened and applied. These areas are less time sensitive and can be acquired at various stages of life, if learning and development in the prime areas are secure. These areas are:

- **Literacy**
- **Mathematics**
- **Understanding the World**
- **Expressive Arts and Design**

The prime areas of learning are fundamental to children's successful learning in the specific areas. The specific areas cannot be encountered in isolation from communication and language or personal, social, emotional and physical development since children always experience the world through communication and physical and sensory involvement. A strong foundation in the prime areas is essential as evidence shows that, if it is not securely in place by age five, it holds children back in other areas of learning and development. In total there are seven areas of learning and development:

Prime Areas

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

At HOCS our aim is to foster and develop relationships between home, school, and the community in order to make strong foundation for the children to learn. Our children are encouraged to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves, be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

".... involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities" (Statutory Framework 2012)

- **Physical Development**

Children are given opportunities to use equipment, move to music and develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increasing understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This can only be achieved by using both the indoor and outdoor environment and by working with a wide range of resources.

"...involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activities and to make healthy choices in relation to food" (Statutory Framework 2012)

- **Communication and Language**

This area covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play, language games and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together.

"...involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations" (Statutory Framework 2012)

Specific Areas

- **Literacy**

Children have the opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence. They are encouraged to develop their early literacy skills in many different ways. Some of these activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing.

"... Involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest" (Statutory Framework 2012)

- **Mathematics**

In the foundation stage we aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement.

" involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using number, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces and measures" (Statutory Framework 2012)

- **Understanding the World**

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate: make decisions and experiment. They learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

" involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment" (Statutory Framework 2012)

- **Expressive Arts and Design**

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to paint, draw, make collages, models and use musical instruments. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching.

“ ... Involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design technology” (Statutory Framework 2012)

Providing for equality of opportunity

Every person working or involved in HOCS have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference – not only so that every child is included and not disadvantaged, but so that they learn from the earliest age to value diversity in themselves, and others. All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable childhood.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and all children and their families are valued. At HOCS all children are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities, we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every 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 EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this 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.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with 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.

“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.”

Environment and Resources

We ensure our EYFS classrooms are bright, attractive and welcoming. There are areas that offer the opportunity to be creative, constructive, imaginative, manipulative and active. The wide range of activities enables them to explore: experiment, investigate and learn in active ways both indoors and outdoors. There are also quiet areas where they can relax and be comfortable. Resources are monitored to ensure they meet the needs of the children and are in good condition. New resources are bought or made as funding is available.

Teaching and Learning

Opportunities are provided for practical activities that are interesting, enjoyable, challenging and based on first hand experiences. We encourage children to explore: experiment, question, make and learn from mistakes and engage in purposeful play.

At HOCS we acknowledge that young children learn and develop best through having the opportunity to interact with people who care about them. The Early Years Foundation Stage uses Development Matters and Early Years Outcomes (EYFS guidance) to support each individual child's development pathway. We aim to provide a balanced, well-planned curriculum which encourages children to develop a disposition to learn.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is organised into seven areas of Learning and Development. Each area has associated Early Learning Goals (ELG). ELG's are established expectations for most children to achieve by the end of the EYFS. At HOCS we strive to achieve these established expectations by the end of the EYFS but acknowledge that some children, depending on their individual needs may still be working towards some goals when they enter Year One. At HOCS the EYFS philosophy continues into Year One '**building on**' the children's skills, knowledge and experiences.

Active learning through play

At HOCS we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Being active involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve the children; therefore we believe Early Years education should be as fun and practical as possible. In Foundation One and Foundation Two, play is our basic tool for teaching. Play is essential, a powerful motivator, it encourages children to be creative and to develop their ideas, learn new skills and mix with others. At HOCS we provide both structured and un-structured play opportunities indoors and outdoors. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, and develop their personal interests and curiosity.

Child-Initiated and Adult-Led activities:

Play helps children make sense of the world around them, initiate own learning and begin to understand new concepts, apply new skills and develop existing ones.

Play is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge and is combined with direct teaching of skills and knowledge through adult-led experiences.

Special Educational Needs

The school's purpose is to deliver a well-planned, balanced and appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the children and the community. We have high expectations of all our children and provide them with quality learning experiences covering all aspects of the curriculum. These are irrespective of race, gender, class or disability. Every child needs to achieve success in order to develop a positive self-image. We recognise that all our children, including those with special educational needs, require a differentiated approach in order for them to have access to the whole curriculum and therefore reach their potential. It is the responsibility of 'ALL' members of staff to ensure that teaching strategies, resources and support are appropriate to the needs of each individual. The school policy is to provide special needs support earlier rather than later. This means staff is aware of the importance of any special needs as the result of early assessment.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Assessment for Learning (AFL) is used throughout school, its formative approach, based on observation, is well suited to EYFS practice. Planning for individual needs and learning requirements is one of the most effective ways of meeting the diverse needs of all children.

During the day we spend a great deal of time watching how and where children play, how they relate to other children using the same equipment, how much language and how technical the language is that is being used. From our observations we plan activities, to reinforce, develop and extend children's knowledge. At times we work with children individually — trying to close a gap they might have in an area of learning. We work with small groups of children — our focus group time is a good example of small group working. During the day we also get together in large groups (Circle Time) giving all the children the opportunity to sit with friends, listen to a story, take part in topic based activities or sing songs together.

Partnership working

At HOCS we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted in the EYFS framework. We welcome and encourage parents to become involved with their children's education. We acknowledge that parents/carers are their children's first and most enduring educators and recognise when parents/carers and school work together the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Parental involvement begins even before children start in F1 or F2, with an invitation to visit the school, meet other children, parents and staff and attend 'Stay and Play' sessions. Parents meetings are held throughout the year. The first meeting takes place during the autumn term; this allows teachers and parents to discuss how well children have settled into the setting (including a short progress report). The second parent's evening takes place during the spring term; during this meeting teachers will feedback on children's learning and development progress (including a short progress report).

A full report is sent out at the end of the summer term.

Half termly topic based newsletters are written to inform parents/carer about the learning taking place during the half term, as well as keeping parents/carers informed of events taking place in the EYFS.

Admission

Children and parents/carers are encouraged to separate gradually according to the needs of the child. F1 children are admitted on a staggered system over the first half term. (See Settling In Policy)

Staffing

At present we have three EYFS classes, two F2 (Reception) and one F1 (Nursery). They are staffed by a full-time Class Teacher and support given by full-time Teaching Assistants. In F2 support is given by one teaching assistant in each class and in F1 by two teaching assistants.

Transition

The key to ensuring successful transition between all settings is that the child's social, emotional and educational needs are addressed. At HOCS, we begin this important process prior to admission with 'Pre-transition Agency Meetings.' Transition must be seen as a process not an event, is gradual, child led and planned for appropriately.

