



Hoole St. Michael Church of England Primary School

The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2023-24

Vision Statement

Christ's love is in everything we do at Hoole St Michael. Our creative and high-achieving Church of England Primary School is safe, loving and supportive. We encourage the building of good relationships and friendship through respect, tolerance and understanding. Within our Christian family, where parents are our partners in all aspects of school life, we aim to inspire a love for learning within each and every child.

I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHO STRENGTHENS ME. PHILIPPIANS 4.13

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The purpose of the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

1. Our Intent and Aims

The Foundation Stage policy reflects the value and importance of early years' education. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support to fulfil their potential. It provides a framework for staff, which gives guidance on practice, and outlines procedures for planning teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluating the curriculum. The policy contributes towards raising educational standards within the early years and ensures that the needs of the youngest children are met within the context of policies, planning, agreed teaching approaches and organisational structures. The Early Years curriculum is being developed in accordance with DfE Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The term Foundation Stage refers to children from birth to five years old. Therefore, in our setting the terms "early years" refer to the children in our Nursery class known as 'Honey Bees' and also our children who are Reception aged in the 'Discovery Class'. The policy reflects the main aims of the school, which are described in detail in the school prospectus.

The early learning goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage. In the Foundation Stage we believe that children will acquire and develop the following:

1. skills
2. knowledge
3. understanding
4. independence
5. moral values
6. the ability to enjoy learning and thrive

2. Introduction

The Early Years Policy addresses all aspects of the needs of young children and ensures that we are addressing the four overarching and guiding principles outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

These four principles shape our practice in the care, development and learning of our youngest children in our school:

- **Unique Child**

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning. They can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

At Hoole St. Michael, we meet the needs of our pupils 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 the children's learning needs;

: 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;

: teaching the children about Growth Mindset and how their brains can 'grow'

: monitoring the children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary

- Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships

We strive to build positive relationships with all the families we work with. Our aim is to form positive partnership with parents/ and or care givers as we value the contributions they make. At Hoole St. Michael, we do this through:

: our induction process which is where we meet parents to discuss their child before they start nursery/reception;

: the reception children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school, during pre-school visits in the summer term. These take the form of the teacher visiting nursery and also when the child comes in for their taster sessions;

: inviting all of the parents to the relevant induction meeting in the summer term before their child starts. Plus, an EYFS curriculum meeting in September.

: inviting parents to curriculum meetings where a specific topic is taught e.g. reading, phonics, early maths

: encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. This may be face to face or via private messaging on Dojo

: offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress

: planning for and arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

: Use of Dojo which enables parents to contribute towards their child's learning journey.

: Play and stay sessions which encourage parents to take part in their child's routine and see how their child learns within the early years setting.

- Enabling Environments

The environment plays a key role the development of a child. Children's experiences should respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between school and parents/carers. At our school, we are extremely fortunate to have a large outdoor environment where learning is planned for and organised in order to meet the needs of our children, every week we have Woodland Wednesday and we encourage both the honeybees and discovery children to be engrossed in learning on a 'bigger' scale. Our learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. There are opportunities for child-initiated activities where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended.

- Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. Practitioners teach children through challenging playful opportunities focusing on all areas of development (prime and specific). They foster the characteristics of effective learning (Playing and Exploring, Active Learning and Creating and Thinking Critically) in all they do.

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning see section 7 'Early Years Curriculum.' These areas are delivered throughout topics and also the child's interests; they are linked closely together. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Nursery and

Reception children (EYFS) have their own shared outdoor area used all year round in all weathers. We believe that being in God's great outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale as well as to be physically active linking the indoors and outdoors together. At Hoole St. Michael, our EYFS children also have the opportunity to learn and explore through Forest Schools. An afternoon per week is timetabled for our EYFS children in our Forest School area.

3. Key Aims and Principles of the Early Years Policy

The Foundation Stage Staff believe the aims of the EYFS framework principles underpin their practice and reflect a shared vision of how children develop and learn. It also underpins the activities and experiences which help children make progress, and the type of stimulating environment which promotes opportunities for learning.

4. Staffing

All staff involved in the education of young children need to be able to develop good relationships with the children in their care so that they can feel secure, respected and thus able both to make mistakes and cope with minor failures as well as building confidently on their successes.

Staff training needs are audited annually and incorporated into the next action plan for the Foundation Stage.

In 2023/24 the following people work in the Foundation Stage Classes at Hoole St. Michael CE Primary School.

Teaching Staff

Mrs Alison Mesghali	Discovery Class teacher (Mon-Weds)
Mrs Sue Hothersall	Discovery Class teacher (Weds-Fri)

Teaching Assistant

Miss Chloe Radcliffe	TA3 (Full Time)
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5. Early Years provision, organisation and the learning environment

Foundation Stage provision at Hoole St. Michael is organised as follows:

Our children who attend Honey Bees nursery are based in the Discovery Classroom with an additional quiet/reading room. Our Reception children are based in our Discovery Classroom with an additional learning classroom and reflection and reading area. Both Nursery and Reception children have access to continuous provision within the Discovery Classroom and within our extensive outdoor learning environment. Our intake for Reception is 15.

The Nursery and Reception children enjoy a very creative environment with outside play area, a range of indoor/outdoor equipment and resources which are available to meet the needs of the children. Our Nursery and Reception children also have access to equipment and facilities within the school, e.g. hall, library, school field, outdoor classroom. Both the learning classroom and Discovery classroom have their own interactive whiteboard, an ipad and access to the school's bank of laptops.

Staff in the Foundation Stage class have specialist training, knowledge and expertise with working with young children and they liaise with other school staff and professionals e.g. Educational

Psychologists, school nurse etc to provide a multi-disciplinary team. In the past, EYFS has gained the Lancashire **Step into Quality** and the Mathematics Quality Mark.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs. Staff organise a range of approaches based on first-hand experiences, which give children the chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups and explore the learning environment.

6. Parental Involvement

The staff in the Foundation Stage believe visits into school, meetings, workshops etc enable parents/carers to share valuable information which can help make a smooth transition from home to school. It also allows parents to ask any questions they may have about starting school. Parents/carers are actively encouraged to get involved in the school community.

The staff will aim to create a welcoming, happy and relaxed environment which enables parents to feel confident in their role as a partner in their children's education. Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom to review recent topic displays, to see what the children are doing, take part in activities and be actively involved in their child's learning. Parents/carers are encouraged to become involved in the Foundation Stage curriculum by sharing skills, e.g. baking, music, art etc. Parents are welcome on a daily basis to speak with members of staff regarding their child's progress or any concerns they may have.

Staff recognise that effective partnerships with parent/carers have a positive impact on children's development and learning, and therefore aim to provide opportunities for parents/carers to keep staff informed about their child's development or any concerns they may have. Foundation Stage parents are kept fully informed with regular newsletters, daily updates via Dojo of the learning which has taken place, twice yearly Parents' Evenings and end of year profiles and reports in addition to regular informal discussions.

An induction meeting is held in the summer term before the child starts in September to discuss the day to day running of school, introduce key staff and collect information on each child.

During the first term, an early skills workshop is held which focuses on the Foundation Stage curriculum and how parents/carers can support their children's learning at home, with particular emphasis on phonics, early reading and early mathematical skills.

7. Early Years Curriculum

Implementation

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (2023)

There are seven areas of learning and development which shape our educational programmes in our early years setting. 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, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development;
- personal, social and emotional development.

Our EYFS children are also supported in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world;
- expressive arts and design.

Communication and language development 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.

Physical development 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 activity.

Personal, social and emotional development 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. Children will also be taught to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Literacy development 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.

Our teaching of synthetic phonics is based on Red Rose Phonics.

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures. Mathematics is guided by White Rose Maths Hub and NCETM.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. It aims to build understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world.

Expressive arts and design involves developing and enabling children's artistic and cultural awareness as they explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. It also involves providing opportunities and encouragement for children to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the 'Characteristics of effective Learning' which help practitioners identify a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The Three Characteristics are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things and 'have a go.'

- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep trying even if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We recognise that children’s learning is holistic and that children neither recognise nor benefit from being confined with subject boundaries. We aim to provide a coherent curriculum that provides a clear focus for learning and draws together relevant activities which contribute to the development of the whole child. Thus, children are able to use and extend what they know, can do and understand within a realistic context.

Children in the early years learn in a variety of ways; by watching others, talking, asking questions, listening, exploring and investigating. The EYFS recognises the importance of well-planned play (indoors and outdoors) in helping children to learn and develop. Well planned-play is also a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge. We recognise the crucial role of Foundation Stage staff in planning real experiences to enable children to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.

The EYFS recognises the importance of laying a secure foundation for future learning. It is crucial to their future success that children’s earliest experiences help to build a secure foundation for learning throughout their school years and beyond. Practitioners must be sensitive to the individual development of each child to ensure that the activities they undertake are suitable for the stage that they have reached. Children need to be stretched, but not pushed beyond their capabilities, so that they can continue to enjoy learning. The keys to achieving this are:

- Ongoing observational assessment to inform planning for each child’s continuing development through play-based activities
- A flexible approach that responds quickly to children’s learning and development needs
- Coherence of learning and development across different settings and related to their children’s experience at home

The statutory early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. They provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS, so laying secure foundations from birth for future learning. By the end of the EYFS, some children will have met the goals. Other children, depending on their individual needs, will be working towards some or all of the goals, particularly some younger children, some children with learning difficulties and disabilities and some learning English as an additional language. Detailed guidance on the early learning goals is set out in the *EYFS Statutory Framework* and *Development Matters in the EYFS*.

The curriculum in the foundation stage, is planned for and delivered by the Early Years teachers. It ensures access to the curriculum for all children including those with SEND. Key to planning in the foundation stage, is planning from the children’s interest. Therefore, children in the foundation stage may not always continue with a set topic, although progression in key skills will still be taught through these topics.

8. Planning, Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Impact

We believe that assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. At Hoole St Michael, ongoing assessment/formative assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Our Foundation stage team will observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, our team will respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress, and observations that parents and carers share.

At Hoole, assessment will not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. Paperwork will be limited to that which is absolutely necessary to promote children's successful learning and development. Parents and/or carers will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development through regular discussions, access to their child's learning journey, an end of year report, plus whole school parents' evenings. Our team will address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

In Reception, our children are assessed, (Baseline and then end of year in the summer term); teacher assessment is inputted regularly for analysis on our Lancashire Early Years on line tracker. In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, and no later than 30 June in that term, the EYFS Profile must be completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. The Profile will reflect: ongoing observations; all relevant records held by the setting; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development will be assessed against the early learning goals. Our team will indicate whether the children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

The Year 1 teacher will be given a copy of the Profile report together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. There will be an end of year dialogue between our Reception and Year 1 teacher about each child's stage of development and learning needs in order to assist with the planning of activities in Year 1.

We share the results of the Profile with parents and/or carers, and explain to them when and how they can discuss the Profile with their child's teacher.

The Profile is completed for all children, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Reasonable adjustments to the assessment process for children with special educational needs and disabilities will be made as appropriate. SEND children are supported by TAs, SENDCO, EHCPs and differentiated activities (Please refer to SEND Policy) regular monitoring and evaluation takes place within the Foundation Stage.

Topics covered by the Foundation Stage children through the areas of learning are planned to be:

- Interesting, enjoyable, challenging and relevant learning experiences, both inside and out, within the seven areas of learning.
- Learning experiences that take account of the life experiences of the children, the characteristics of the community and the concerns of children's families.
- Learning which uses a multi-sensory approach.
- Learning opportunities which enable children to make connections between areas of learning and transfer and consolidate their learning across the curriculum.

Learning Journeys contain photographs of the children and their work along with a commentary by staff. They are built up during the year to show progress, skills and celebrate significant achievements. Work can also be seen in individual children's books and floor books.

Educational visits and visitors

During the year, EYFS children will have the opportunity to study topics. In order to enhance and enrich the curriculum, children will go on visits to the local area and visitors are invited into school to speak to the children. Below are some examples of visits and visitors:

- Church
- Local nursery/garden centre,
- Autumn walk,
- Blackpool Zoo
- Visits from fire/police/ambulance workers,
- Local vicar.
- RNLI
- Local library

(See also Curriculum Plan)

9. Liaison with other agencies

The reception teachers liaise with outside agencies and the school SENDCo.

10. Staff Development

The identification of training needs for the Foundation Stage staff will take place through the appraisal process and/or staff development professional reviews.

The Foundation Stage manager will ensure that:

- Appropriate dissemination of training/materials/good practice take place regularly.
- A record of INSET activities is maintained.
- There is an assessment of the impact of INSET etc. on the quality of the teaching and learning.

11. Reviewing the Early Years Policy

The Early Years policy will be reviewed annually by the EYFS staff, head teacher and governors curriculum sub-committee.