

# EYFS POLICY



## Introduction:

*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 early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. (The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE March 2017).*

## Aims

At Hollymount School, we ensure the delivery of the following four overarching statutory 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 and at different rates**.

## Objectives

In the EYFS we have realistic and challenging expectations and 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 through a creative curriculum and learning environment in line with the Statutory Framework for the EYFS.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs and styles.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.
- Embedding fundamental values and a growth mindset to teach children a sense of self and belonging; enabling them to learn and stay true to the values that make people good citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and lifelong learners.

## Learning and Development:

Learning and development is categorised into three **Prime Areas** of learning:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

And four **Specific Areas** of learning:

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

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through the Characteristics

Of Effective Learning:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

### **Planning**

During planning sessions, discussion takes place as a unit to ensure activities allow for Characteristics of Effective Learning to be demonstrated and embedded.

- EYFS teachers have a rough idea of the topics that will be covered by using a “Cycle A” and “Cycle B” Long Term Planning Grid. Rotation of topics is important for the purpose of variety, keeping topics fresh and also for those attending Nursery for longer than a year. These topics are interchangeable and we base our planning around topics and the children’s interests.
- EYFS teachers meet every half term to plan for the next half term (in the form of a medium term plan) in line with the children’s interests. A “sparkly starter” and “fab finish” to each topic are planned to capture the children’s interests and hook them into the topic being taught. Parents receive the medium term plan ahead of each half term so that some pre teaching can occur at home.
- Teachers use the medium term planning as a guide when they meet weekly to plan for the week ahead. Reception teachers plan separately for mathematics (including a mastery approach), phonics, skills led group teaching and all other areas in the continuous provision. (see appendix 1, 2, 3, 4). Nursery planning includes differentiated group teaching for phonics and maths (including a mastery approach), additional carpet sessions and continuous provision. (see appendix 5)
- Planning takes into account children with individual needs in line with the School’s Inclusion policy.

### **Teaching and Provision**

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities in both the indoor and outdoor environments. Children are encouraged to challenge themselves through self-selecting tasks and activities. The activities offer opportunities for extended learning and are structured to develop their learning. Practitioners respond to each child’s emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

In Nursery, carpet times build up to twenty minutes in length over the academic year, where the younger children who start in January, access shorter, smaller carpet time sessions. Carpet sessions can be taught as a whole class or in split, differentiated groups. At the start of each Nursery session, there is usually a carpet session which is either phonics, maths or topic based. The last carpet session of every day is used to either recap learning, sing songs or read a text. The class have one PE session a week.

In Reception, approximately 20 minutes of phonics and maths (except on Fridays due to PE) is taught daily. There is always an additional “topic focused” carpet session each day but this can vary from literacy, such as shared writing or a core text, PSE or Understanding of the World. Guided Reading begins at the start of Spring Term and occurs once a week either on a 1:1 level or in a group situation depending on individual children’s needs. Every class has one session of PE a week and access to outdoor provision throughout the unit every day.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

At Hollymount School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Observations are noted down in a variety of ways:

- Anecdotal observations – practitioners try their hardest to make use of “the child’s voice” when recording these types of observations.
- Group observations
- Annotated photographs
- Annotated work samples
- Parent/carer observations from home

Some classes make use of the Ipad to record observations (App – Orbit) but all observations are either printed or hand recorded to go into each child’s individual profile which is kept in class. The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers throughout the year.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Exceeding expected levels or,
- Not yet reaching expected levels (‘emerging’)

Every parent receives a report at the end of an academic year indicating how their child has fared against the Early Learning Goals and teachers report on the child’s progress against the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

### **Admissions and Induction**

All admissions are handled by the Local Authority. Nursery, and those children new to the school in Reception, meet their child’s new teacher and teaching assistant ahead of the child’s start date through a Home Visit. A transition morning or afternoon is arranged prior to the children’s start date where children are able to visit the unit with their parent/ carers and stay for a play for an hour. Children then start Nursery and Reception on staggered dates of entry allowing for an initial settling in period.

### **Working with Parents**

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. The EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development in a variety of ways:

- Two opportunities across the academic year to come into class and view their child's profile and learning through play.
- Two Parents Evenings across the academic year in Reception and once a year in Nursery.
- A school report at the end of the academic year when children are due to move up into a new class.
- Teachers are always available at the door if parents need to have a "quick" word about their child or alternatively parents are invited to make an appointment to see the class teacher if they wish to have a discussion about their child's development or progress.
- Parents have opportunities to contribute to their child's learning journey by completing our home observation sheets (handed out every half term).
- Class parent representatives work closely with class teachers to act as "their voice" to the parents regarding day to day whole class events.

The EYFS Leader ensures that parents are kept up to date and informed throughout the academic year by:

- Providing parents with a newsletter (by email) at the end of every half term, reporting on the learning in the EYFS and the topic that was taught.
- Ensuring that "Welcome to EYFS" talks are delivered by class teachers at the start of an academic year or mid-year for children in Nursery starting in January.
- Leading various workshops that may arise over the academic year – namely phonics and maths workshops.

### **Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures:**

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

### **Transition**

Transition arrangements are planned for both Nursery to Reception transition and Reception to Year 1 transition and managed by the EYFS Leader.

Approved by the STL Committee: 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Review Date: Summer term 2021