

'At Holywell Village First School we have high aspirations for our children to become well-rounded and responsible future citizens. They are happy, independent and have positive self-esteem. Our children have a thirst for learning. They are curious about the world around them and are confident to 'have a go'. They are reflective learners who persevere and demonstrate good communication and social skills. They are thoughtful, caring and kind.'



Holywell Village First School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy Statement

This policy has been developed to reflect the changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum with the implementation of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2021), the updated Development Matters in the EYFS, the Reception baseline assessment and the EYFS profile which will be completed at the end of the reception year.

Definition

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school children are able to begin nursery after their third birthday if places are available.

Intent

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In EYFS we begin by assessing the individual needs of each learner in order to develop and implement our flexible curriculum. We ensure every child has the best start to life and that all children make progress through their own learning journey. We strive to 'make learning an adventure' by providing the children with a variety of carefully planned opportunities. We have high expectations and believe that our pupils should be active and curious learners.

Implementation

We follow the EYFS statutory framework 2021 and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2022. To support our curriculum we use the guidance from Development Matters and the Assessment and Reporting Arrangements.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique Child

'Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.' EYFS

At Holywell Village First School we strive to meet the individual needs of all children through:

- Establishing relationships with parent/carers very early to quickly find out each child's 'starting point' and life experiences.
- Carrying out baseline assessments, including a speech and language screening assessment.
- Careful planning, reflective practice and thorough ongoing assessments.

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- Identifying and responding early to concerns about a child's development.
- Providing a learning environment that allows children to feel safe and secure, confident and competent and that promotes independence and enthusiasm to learn.
- Recognising and valuing all types of learners, including visual, auditory and kinaesthetic, and using a variety of teaching strategies to accommodate this.
- Valuing each child as an individual and ensuring practice is inclusive.

Equal Opportunities, Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented

See Equal Opportunities and Special Educational Needs Policies.

At Holywell Village First School we aim for children to learn to value diversity in others and grow up making a positive contribution to society.

All children will be treated fairly regardless of ethnicity, religion or culture, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability.

We will make appropriate challenges for gifted and talented children.

We will promote positive attitudes to diversity and difference within all children.

All children will be listened to and respected.

We actively promote equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that all children and families feel included, safe and valued.

We will identify and respond early to needs which could lead to the development of learning difficulties.

We recognise the importance of identifying children who require some additional support as early as possible. We will always work in partnership with the child's family.

Welfare Requirements and Safety Guidelines

See Safeguarding Children and Behaviour Policies.

Our designated member of staff with responsibility for Child Protection issues is Mrs Sarah Brett.

We provide an environment that is welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning through play, to grow in confidence and to fulfil their potential.

We follow the welfare requirements of the Statutory Framework for the EYFS.

We recognise that 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.

We actively promote the good health of the children.

We ensure outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys are safe and suitable for their purpose with written risk assessments in place. We constantly reappraise both the environments and activities to which children are being exposed and make necessary adjustments to secure their safety at all times. Risk assessments will be reviewed at least once a year or more frequently if the need arises.

Boundaries, rules and limits are established very early with the children. We strive to ensure children understand the rules, are clear about the limits and that they too make a contribution to making the rules. Our boundaries and expectations for behaviour are shared with parent and carers to enable there to be consistency at home and in the setting.

Positive Relationships

'Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parent/carers and/or a key person.' EYFS

We recognise the importance of quickly establishing and maintaining respectful and caring relationships with all children in order for them to feel confident and safe within our setting. We strive to ensure children feel happy and secure so that they can be confident to explore, to try out new things and to respond positively to challenges without fear of failure or ridicule. Good relationships with the children allow us, as practitioners, to support and

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extend each child's learning and to be able to judge when they are ready to be taught new skills.

Parent/carers

The Early Years team strives to create a welcoming atmosphere. We strongly believe that a positive relationship and effective communication between school and parent/carers is essential. By working together we will be able to provide the best possible start to school life for every child.

'Learning is a continuous journey through which children build on all the things they have already experienced and come across new and interesting challenges.'

We recognise parent/carers as their child's first and most important educator and understand that they know their child best. It is important that parent/carers share with us their child's qualities and achievements prior to their child even beginning school. This enables us to build upon what the children know already and to meet the individual needs of each child from the onset. We do this through the 'All about me' booklet that parent/carers complete at home with their child and through the stay and play sessions which provide the opportunity for staff to get to know the children prior to them starting school. The sessions also give parent/carers the opportunity to chat to staff informally or if they wish they can arrange an organised consultation meeting where they can speak to staff in confidence. For children who are joining our nursery we offer parent/carers the option of a home visit, carried out by the nursery teacher and the learning support assistant.

Positive relationships and effective communication with parent/carers is maintained through:

- Our open doors policy allows parent/carers access to speak to members of staff on a daily basis.
- Curriculum information each term presented on paper to parent/carers but also displayed on our school website, as well as meetings/videos to explain the curriculum and how we assess children and reading.
- Parent/carer Consultations
- Fundraising events.
- Opportunities for parent/carers to help within school.
- Encouraging parent/carers to contribute to their child's learning journal through School360 online journal.

Enabling Environments

'The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning' EYFS

Organisation of the Learning Environment

*A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in **secure and safe, yet challenging**, indoor and outdoor spaces.*

The Early Years Foundation Stage has two classrooms. One used as a base for nursery and the other used as a base for reception. The two classrooms are joined by a shared area. We have a large enclosed outdoor area accessible from both classrooms.

All areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage, both indoors and outdoors, are organised to encourage independence and to provide opportunities for the children to explore and find things out for themselves. Resources and activities are carefully thought of and planned so that they are accessible, challenging and appropriate for all children. Careful consideration is taken to ensure that there is continuity and progression in the provision throughout the unit.

There are opportunities for children from nursery and reception to choose activities throughout both classrooms and the outdoor learning spaces. This also allows children the opportunity to work with all the practitioners with the Early Years Foundation Stage Team.

The children have P.E. lessons in the school hall or outdoors weather permitting.

The children have daily access to the outdoor area. Being outdoors enables the children to have first-hand experiences with the natural world. It gives them a sense of freedom and provides opportunities for the children to explore, try out their ideas, develop confidence and to be physically active.

The Wider Context

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We recognise the need to work together across services in order to achieve the *Every Child Matters* outcomes for children.

As a setting we value our local community and wherever possible links are made with local community groups. We ensure effective communication between ourselves and other settings when a child joins us or leaves us to ensure that the child's needs are met and there is continuity in their learning.

Early Years staff attend network meetings throughout the year, led by the Early Years Consultants.

Learning and Development

'The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.'

Areas of Learning and Development

There are seven areas of learning and Development.

The prime areas:

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

The specific areas:

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

There are three areas for the **Characteristics of Effective Learning**. These are:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

The Characteristics of Effective Learning and the prime and specific Areas of Learning and Development are all interconnected.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The curriculum is delivered through a balance of child initiated and adult led activities. In both the nursery and reception classes the children will work with adults as a whole class, in small groups and individually as well as having the opportunity to choose their own activities.

Activities are carefully planned to ensure we meet the needs of all the children and consider the different types of learners e.g. some children learn best by listening, some by looking and others by doing.

It is our aim to help children to become independent learners, who are enthusiastic and eager to learn. 'Challenge' for all children is addressed through differentiated activities, levels of support and adult intervention, carefully planned resources in areas and the 'working walls' that are in the nursery and the reception classes. The working walls are used by the class teacher's to let children know how they can lead their own learning and specific challenges are set.

Play

It is well known that children learn best through play.

'In their play children learn at their highest level.' EYFS

As adults our roles are to support and enhance the children's abilities to think critically and ask questions and most importantly to provide a well-resourced and challenging learning environment for purposeful play to take place in.

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We provide flexible resources that can be used in many different ways to facilitate children's play and exploration. We place high value on children's play, carefully observing it to inform future learning opportunities, and joining in with their play to support, and extend it when necessary.

Active Learning

To promote active learning we:

- Understand that children learn best through physical and mental challenges.
- Help children to feel secure and confident and be keen to learn and find things out for themselves.
- Challenge and extend the children's thinking.
- Personalise learning and involve parent/carers.
- Provide an environment that is interesting, attractive and accessible to every child so they can learn independently.
- Regularly review the environment to ensure the above.
- Recognise that every child's learning journey is unique to them.

We demonstrate effective practice of promoting **Creativity and Critical Thinking** through:

- Valuing what parent/carers tell us about the way in which their children behave and learn at home.
- Allowing children to move equipment around the setting to extend their own play and learning.
- Ensuring that there is a balance between adult led and child initiated activities.
- The learning journals that contain photos and observations of each child's learning and are shared online with parent/carers.
- modelling being creative.

Impact

Observations and assessment opportunities inform planning and ensure children's individual needs are met.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Look, listen, note is daily practice and allows us to:

- Get to know a child better.
- Plan appropriate play and learning experiences based on the child's interests and needs.
- Identify any concerns about a child's development.

We use observations to assess the progress which children are making and match observations to the expectations of the early learning goals.

Observational evidence is gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts and is contributed by all practitioners working in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Parent/carers are also encouraged to contribute information in their child's on-line School360 online journal.

Our planning reflects our belief that all areas of learning and development are connected and all are important. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff plan together to ensure continuity and progression across Nursery and Reception. All plans, short, medium and long term, are flexible enough to adapt to circumstances and children's current interests.

Assessment and professional knowledge is used to inform and guide our everyday planning to help the children make progress. We use development matters as a guide to help practitioners make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next. The guidance can help practitioners check that children are secure in all the earlier steps of learning before you look at their 'age band'. Depth in learning matters much more than moving from one band to the next or trying to cover everything. Practitioners will therefore assess the children based on their individual learning needs. Observational checkpoints can help practitioners decide if children are 'on track' or 'not on track'.

Formative assessment is based on observations, photographs, things children have made or drawn and information from parent/carers. Evidence gathered is predominantly from children's self-initiated activities. All practitioners are involved in making assessments during adult led activities. Assessments may be recorded in children's individual records, noted on planning or shared verbally. Assessments are used to plan the next steps, to

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meet learning needs and to make informed decisions about each child's progress.

Nursery

On entry to Nursery baseline assessments are made using the Northumberland Passport to School Readiness checker. This will then support planning to ensure every child makes progress when given the right support. Further assessments are completed on the passport at nursery mid point and at the end of the year (reception ready).

Reception

Children entering reception will have their 'reception ready' baseline completed using the Northumberland School Readiness Passport. For children entering our school from another setting their records will be requested.

'Children in reception also have to complete a statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This will be carried out within the first six weeks of the children attending school. Its main purpose is to create a starting point to measure the progress schools make with their pupils. Practitioners will receive a set of statements which provide a narrative description of how your child performed in the assessment. The data from the assessment will only be used by the Department for Education when your child has reached the end of year 6, to provide the baseline to measure the progress of your child's year group from reception to year 6. The data from the assessment, including numerical scores, is not shared with you, pupils, teachers, or external bodies, including schools, and there will be no published scores at pupil, school or national level.'

Throughout reception observational checkpoints can also help practitioners decide if children are 'on track' or 'not on track' based on the development matters guidance and also practitioners' knowledge of the individual child.

At the end of reception children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals (ELG). The statutory EYFS framework requires the EYFS profile assessment to be carried out in the final term of the year in which a child reaches age 5, and no later than 30 June in that term. The EYFS profile is intended to provide a reliable, valid and accurate assessment of each child's development at the end of the EYFS. It is made up of an assessment of the child's outcomes in relation to the 17 ELG descriptors. Practitioners are expected to use their professional judgement to make these assessments, based on their knowledge and understanding of what the child knows, understands, and can do. This information is shared with parent/carers through a written report.

To support assessments and judgements made, each child has their own online Learning Journal that is contributed to by the children themselves and by all Early Years staff. Parent/carer contributions and sharing of information are sought through the online portal 'School360 online journal'.

All records of development and achievement from nursery are continued in reception. Assessments are quality assured between practitioners, with Senior Leadership Team, between other settings and within the Local Authority. Progress across EYFS is monitored each term alongside the rest of school in Pupil Progress meetings with the Head Teacher and/or Deputy.

Progress and achievements are reported to parent/carers throughout the EYFS.

For further information regarding assessment please refer to the school's assessment policy and also the EYFS assessment policy.

Admission Arrangements

In our school, children are able to begin nursery after their third birthday if places are available. Home visits for children starting our nursery take place before they start school.

Entry into nursery and school is staggered. For nursery, children begin two or three at a time, starting with the youngest children and/or children whose parent/carers are in receipt of 30 hours funding. The children are able to stay for the full session immediately. For reception, all children will begin together on the first day of term. For the first week the children stay for their lunch and go home at 1.15p.m. For the second week the children stay until 2.00p.m. and from the third week the children stay for the full school day.

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If there are children who struggle to settle into nursery or reception then staff would work with the parent/carers to aid the transition to what best suits the child.

Transition

We endeavour to make every child's transition into school and within school as happy as possible. Before children start nursery they are invited to visit the nursery and stay for a short time. Parent/carers accompany their child on this visit. Home-visits are carried out the term before the child starts nursery.

A meeting is held at the beginning of the summer term for parent/carers to explain admission and give an insight into school life at Holywell.

Nursery aged children who have attended our setting are obviously already familiar with reception staff due to the organisation of our EYFS and therefore transition from nursery to reception can be expected to be smooth. Children who have attended other settings and are joining our reception class will usually be visited in their current setting during the summer term prior to them starting school. They are also given the opportunity to come for 'stay and play' sessions during the summer term. Parent/carers are given the choice as to how many sessions they would like their child to have. All of the children starting reception are given the opportunity to have their lunch in the school hall during the 'stay and play' sessions in the summer term.

Reception children visit year one class during the second half of summer term. The year one teacher also visits the children in the reception classroom and will perhaps read a story or carry out a short activity with the children in familiar surroundings.

This policy has been written in line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and contains content taken from The Statutory Framework for the EYFS and Development Matters in the EYFS.

Signed Headteacher: _____

Chair of Committee: _____

Date: 27th January 2022

This policy will be reviewed Spring 2024