



## Howard Park Community School

### Early Years Policy

Date Current Policy Ratified: September 2017

<i>Signature</i>	<i>Signature</i>
Date:	Date:
Chair of Governors	Head Teacher

#### ***Inspiring, nurturing and enabling lifelong learners.***

Here at Howard Park Community School, we believe in the potential of every child so all the children are given the opportunity to develop the capacity to surprise themselves and those around them. They are taught to challenge themselves to build confidence and resilience.

*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 2014).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Howard Park Community School our Foundation Stage is for children from 3 to 5 years. Children are able to join us in nursery the term after they are 3, and when they are due to begin school (reception) in the September before they turn 5. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life. We endeavour to ensure that children "learn and develop well and kept healthy and safe." We aim to support children in their learning through "teaching and experiences that gives children the broad range of skills that provide the right foundation for good progress through school and in life." (Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2012).

At Howard Park Community School we greatly value the important role the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

#### **Our Aims and Principles**

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- To provide a stimulating, caring environment both indoors and outdoors which is sensitive to the needs of the individual child and which helps create an enthusiastic attitude to learning.
- To provide a secure and nurturing setting that promotes self confidence and independence and helps children form positive relationships.
- To provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in KS1 and beyond.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in, and learn from, both teacher led and child initiated activities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experiences and interests in each of the seven areas of learning.
- To make careful observations in order to use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and supporting and extending their learning appropriately.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions.
- To help children build friendships and learn to co-operate with each other.
- To ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, family background, gender or ability have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable program of learning and development and that no child is excluded or disadvantaged in any way.
- To provide opportunities to enable children to develop skills to investigate, make sense of and communicate with the world around them in order to become responsible, healthy members of the community.

The EYFS is based upon four 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.**

### A Unique Child

At Howard Park Community School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. During their first years at nursery and school, the children are introduced to the learning habits. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of the growth mind-set. They are taught that they can 'grow their brains' so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

### Positive Relationships

At Howard Park Community School, we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

## **Parents as Partners**

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators, and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents/carers have played, as well as their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- Holding an Induction Meeting for Parents/Carers before children start their Transition into nursery and school
- Inviting all children to attend "Child's Journey" sessions before they start in our nursery class;
- Inviting parents to stay and settle their child when dropping them at nursery at the beginning of the session
- Inviting parents to a curriculum meeting where approaches to learning are explained and weekly newsletters to describe activities and learning experiences offered as well as ideas for how they can support their child's learning at home
- Offering 'Phonics and Reading' workshops to all parents for children in Reception and encouraging parents to contribute observations in the home/school link book and sharing our approach to reading
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress
- Using the Tapestry online program to complete observations on the children in the setting which the parents will have free and secure access to
- Encouraging parents to contribute to the child's Tapestry profile by including WOW moments from home and family life
- There is a formal meeting for parents in the first two terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in detail with the class teacher
- Parents receive a written report on their child's achievements, progress and attainment at the end of each school year
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents including: Open afternoons, Celebration assemblies, Christmas Performances, Sports Fun Day, regular trips and outings etc.,.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school each EYFS teacher acts as a 'Key Person' to all children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants and Nursery Nurse. As we run our Foundation Stage classes closely together children build up good relationships with all staff and we ensure that there is continuity and coherence by sharing information about all of the children. on a need to know basis. We have good links with the local feeder playgroups and pre-school settings and regular visits are undertaken throughout the year at times of transition. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children.

## **Inclusion**

All children and their families are valued within our school. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at Howard Park Community School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement. In the early years the children begin to learn to take responsibility for their learning and begin to understand the concept of challenge.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs & Disability policy.

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
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- 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. It is vital that all children in the school are safe. Through PSED teaching and the nurturing approach we provide children with opportunities to help them develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards both in the real and virtual world.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Howard Park Community School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The role of both the indoor and outdoor environment in learning/organisation of learning provides opportunities for child initiated activities reflecting current topics reflecting the wider world/themes of children's interests where they can develop gross motor skills, social skills etc. We provide stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so they can be used, moved and combined in a variety of ways. The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The outdoor learning environment is seen as incredibly important with its impact on health and well-being being a significant factor, especially for young children. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative and explore on a larger scale linking the indoors and outdoors together. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

We begin by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### **Observation, Assessment and Planning**

Planning within the EYFS starts with the Long-Term Plan in conjunction with the whole school's topics/themes. Medium Term Plans are written termly and used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning. A weekly focus is based on the learning objectives linked to the EY curriculum and shared with all EYFS staff. We plan first hand experiences and provide opportunities for challenges appropriate to the development of the children. Short term planning within nursery is based around topics which have stemmed from the children's own interests. These plans are used as a guide for weekly planning, however the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children. This will be indicated on the short term planning proformas used. We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment of attainment and progress in the EYFS is based on observation, discussion, questioning and evidence of children's independent and targeted learning and this involves the teacher, nursery nurse and teaching assistants as appropriate.

These observations may or may not have a specific focus, and are built throughout the year using the Tapestry program. All EYFS staff are proficient at making relevant and insightful observations of the children and these are used to plan the next steps for that child. Progress is tracked using the Development Matters document using the age bands to ascertain “typical” or otherwise development and plan lessons and activities that are appropriate for the children in the setting. We use the EYFS Profile to record our judgements. At the end of the Reception year, each child’s level of development is recorded against 17 Learning Outcomes. Within the final term of each EYFS year group, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against Development Matters and the ELG’s and their characteristics of effective learning. We give opportunities for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children’s development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child’s progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child’s parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the school SENCO in order to access Special Educational Needs support. None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG’s) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

### **Learning and Development**

We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning. At Howard Park Community School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates.

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2.

Features that are specific to the EYFS are:

- The partnership between teachers and parents/carera, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching.
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions to extend and develop play, and talk or utilise other means of communication.
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS.
- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.
- The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.

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- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents. The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

## **Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning: PRIME AREAS

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

### SPECIFIC AREAS

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

These areas are delivered throughout the topics and 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.

## **The Characteristics of Effective Learning**

### **Playing and exploring**

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.” EYFS

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

*“Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is used as an essential part children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must 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, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.”*  
(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2012)

### **Active Learning**

*“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”*  
EYFS

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning, and room to develop their confidence in order that they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

### **Creating and thinking critically**

*“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”* EYFS

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

### **Health and Safety**

At Howard Park Community School, there are clear procedures for assessing risk (see whole school risk assessment policy and risk assessments in place) which includes procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, an annual risk assessment is conducted of the EYFS (see EYFS risk assessment), safeguarding and child protection policies and there is detailed information and procedures to ensure the safety of the children. The EYFS risk assessment must be read in conjunction with other relevant whole school policies. In line with the EYFS statutory framework 2012, we undertake;

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child’s needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child’s parent and/or carer.” A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child’s parents and/or carers on the same day.” (Statutory framework for EYFS 2012)
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times
- Children’s’ dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- Each classroom has a snack and sink area that can provide healthy snacks and drinks. Members of our EYFS staff have received level 2 food hygiene training.
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept (see accident and injury policy).
- The EYFS leader as SENCO in liaison with the Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher (refer to Inclusions policy, behaviour policy, physical restraint policy).
- A health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy.

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- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and iPads, cameras are to be used and stored securely whilst children are in the setting. Devices that are used in school must not be used by staff for their own personal use.
- Appropriate and protective clothing, in line with school policies and code of conduct. Staff are expected to wear clothing that supports them in getting to a child's level and playing and engaging with children at floor level as well as being suitable to wear in the outdoor environments.

### **Transition from Pre-school /Feeder settings**

During the term prior to a child's entry into the foundation stage, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parents are invited to a meeting to ensure they know about nursery and school procedures and any concerns they may want to express.
- Members of staff make visits to feeder settings. The number of visits will depend on the child's needs and how much information gathering is required in order to support the child's transition.
- Children requiring extra support will have additional visits regardless of their setting. Often these children will have been identified as requiring additional support and may be detailed in a specific Transition Plan.
- Nursery staff complete a Home Visit to all children starting in Nursery.
- Children will have organised visits into nursery and school, often supported by a parent/carer or member of staff from those pre-school settings where they have the opportunity to join in with child initiated sessions.

### **From Reception Class to Key Stage 1**

During the final term in Reception, the EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff 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. A child's individual Learning Journal includes on-going observation, 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 is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Learning Journey Profile together with a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

### **Monitoring and review**

It is the responsibility of the EYFS co-ordinator to monitor the development of this policy through year group planning sessions and classroom observations. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion. The Head teacher and various subject coordinators will also carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.