

Hillside's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

Designated Governor Committee:	**Curriculum & Governors**
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Contents

1. Aims 2
2. Legislation 2
3. Structure of the EYFS 2
4. Curriculum 3
5. Assessment 9
6. Safeguarding and welfare procedures 10
7. Monitoring arrangements 10
Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS..... 11

"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)

1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children have access to an enabling and empowering environment that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills required for a good level of progress within school and life.
- A positive and nurturing relationship between staff, children and parent/carers.
- Adaptive and high-quality teaching and learning so that all children make good progress.
- All children are included and supported through equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

3. Structure of the EYFS

Our EYFS setting has Nursery and Reception. The Nursery has multiple sessions that children can access throughout the day. Morning sessions are 8:45 to 11:45 (12:45 if they stay for lunch). Afternoons 12:45 to 15:45. Full day 8:45 to 15:45. Nursery also offers a daily breakfast club from 7:45 am.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Hillside we have a Nursery for children aged 3-4 years and Reception, 4-5years.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework.

Intent:

Our curriculum intends to provide children with enabling and empowering experiences, opportunities and direct instruction that motivate their love of learning and increase curiosity and engagement. Key texts and experiences are intertwined through our provision and teaching ensuring that children leave early years with the love of reading and essential foundational knowledge. The curriculum is designed to be adaptable allowing it to be child centred and cohesive with all elements of foundation subjects.
Throughout the year the curriculum focuses on:

-Discovery

-Connections

-Changes

-Thinking

-Creations

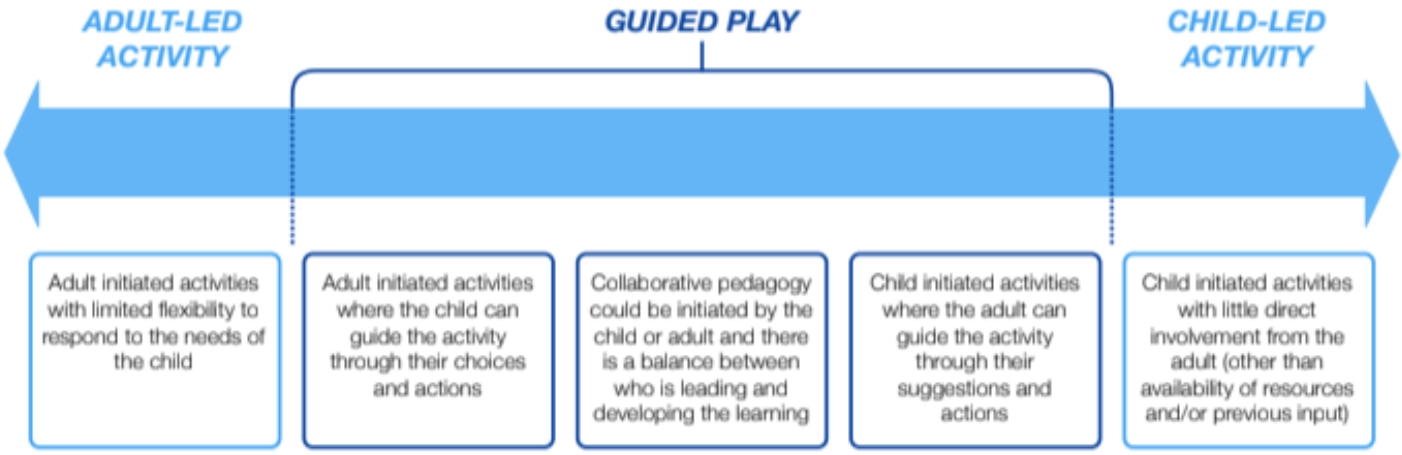
-Investigations

Specific and Prime Areas of Learning and Development:

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

Prime Areas (Essential building blocks for Specific Areas)	**Specific Areas** (Dependent on Prime Areas)
• Communication and language • Physical development • Personal, social and emotional development	• Literacy • Mathematics • Understanding the world • Expressive arts and design

All of these areas are delivered through well thought out continuous provision, child-led activities, daily routines and direct instruction. Both morning and afternoon sessions provide at least 90 minutes of self-initiated time (both indoors and outdoors), where children and adults collaborate as play partners. Below is the Early Years Pedagogical Continuum (EEF) which we flexibly use throughout the curriculum to support and nurture play.

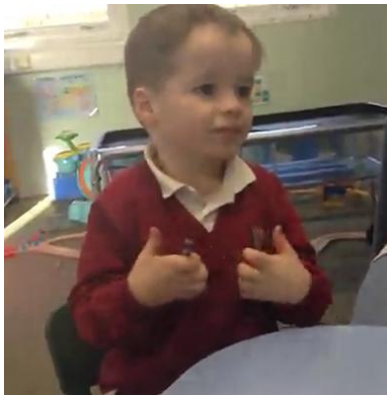


Communication and language development

…providing opportunities for children to develop in a language rich environment, engaging them with a variety of texts and situations, supporting their listening, thinking and speaking skills and methods. (e.g. core boards, sign along)

HOW: adults and children communicating throughout the day using a variety of language and conversational skills and methods, as well as daily opportunities to communicate in small groups. Modelling and scaffolding of skills, where individual needs have been identified. Using WellComm, core boards and sign along to support the variety of ways children communicate.





Physical development

…providing opportunities for children to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. To develop their co-ordination, strength, control and movement.

HOW: Children are able to spend at least 90 minutes both inside and outside within morning and afternoon sessions, developing their fine and gross motor skills (e.g. scissors, pencil control, climbing, riding). In Nursery, children are provided with milk and fruit at snack times and within Reception, they have access to a variety of fruit. The children are given opportunities to help prepare and cook a range of food throughout the year, learning about healthy and nutritional foods. The Reception children receive one 30-minute REAL PE session a week, which teaches new foundational skills, which they have the opportunity to develop further and independently in our outdoor area.





Personal, social and emotional development

…helping children develop emotions and a positive sense of themselves; to form positive relationships and develop the respect and understanding for others; develop conversational and social skills; to understand appropriate choice of behaviour and to have a confidence in their own abilities.

HOW: Opportunities to work within small groups to enable children to build relationships with peers. Children have access to a variety of new and familiar resources, building their confidence, independence and thinking skills. Children are given opportunities to become responsible and to build independence with a range of life-skills (e.g. tidying, hand washing, dressing). Use of key texts, which support the children's understanding of emotions and how to express these. Zones of regulation activities and resources readily available to develop children's understanding of how to identify and regulate their emotions throughout the day and transfer these skills to other parts of their life.






Literacy development

…focusing on nurturing children's love of books, stories and rhymes whilst encouraging them to engage with language and print through various activities. Giving children the foundational skills needed to prepare them for phonics so that they are able to read and write.

HOW: Small group activities support children to develop their ability to rhyme, to hear sounds etc.

- We use FFT phonics to deliver our direct phonics teaching both within Nursery and Reception.
- Letter formation is taught through our FFT phonics scheme, using rhymes to help them remember how to form each letter.
- Children have access to a broad range of well-thought out books, stories, rhymes, songs and activities, allowing them to develop their ability to hear rhyming words, alliteration, sounds and blending. A list of our key-texts that we use throughout the year can be found within our curriculum planning.
- Books and relevant text are used within all areas of the environment.
- Children are provided with phonics books, relevant to their phonics ability, to take home to practice their recognition of sounds and blending skills.
- Children within both Nursery and Reception regularly visit and borrow books from our local library (Bradwell). This gives them access to a broader range of books and enables them to be a valued part of their community.
- Children are encouraged to use a selection of mark-making materials (e.g. pencils, felt tips, paint, chalk)
- In Reception we use the skill progression from Pathways to Write scheme to support the children's writing development. This is supported by Drawing Club to ignite their love of writing.
- In Nursery, drawing club is used within small groups and adapted to the needs of the children, to provide opportunities to mark-make, develop thinking and ignite a love of writing.
- Reading cafés are implemented every 3 weeks in Reception, where parents/carers are able to come and share stories with their children.






Mathematics

…providing opportunities for children to develop a strong understanding and skills linked to number, counting, understanding, one-to-one correspondence, simple calculations, solving problems; and describing shapes, spaces and measure.

HOW:

- In Reception, NCETM Mastering Number is used to support the direct teaching of maths, linked with the Shape, Space and Measure elements from White Rose Maths.
- Master the Curriculum is used to support the direct teaching of maths in Nursery
- Maths resources are accessible every day and within all areas of the continuous provision, providing opportunities to develop mathematical thinking and understanding.
- Mathematical skills and understanding are linked to many of the daily routines, such as lining up, numbered pots in areas to show amount of resources, story voting, rhymes, songs, games etc.
- Mathematical language is modelled and used consistently by all adults.
- In Reception our snack area progresses on from Nursery, into a snack café where the children pay for their snack as well as identifying how many children had each fruit item.






Understanding the world

…supporting children to make sense of their physical world and community, expanding on their own experiences and exploring, observing and finding out more about people, places and the environment.

HOW: Provided with opportunities to access the natural world, making use of our wooded area, observing changes throughout the seasons and having dedicated time in our outdoor area. Well thought out resources and experiences both inside and outside, that allows the children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. There are several opportunities throughout the year for growing and planting, cooking and seasonal observations. Local outings are included throughout the year and visitors invited into the classroom. Working closely with schools in different areas, allowing the children to see similarities and differences between experiences, places, cultures and individuals.





Expressive arts and design

…allowing children to develop their artistic and cultural awareness, supporting their imagination and creativity as well as providing opportunities for self-expression through a variety of opportunities in art, design, music, dance and role-play.

HOW: Through well planned continuous provision which includes painting, pattern making, modelling, dough skills, music making and role play. In Reception music is taught discretely throughout the environment and within daily routines, using the skill progression of Kapow.





4.1 Planning

Planning within the EYFS is completed collaboratively between Nursery and Reception staff to ensure continuity and progression between the classes. Planning is set out in progression stages, rather than in classes, so that there is flexibility to use elements of all the stages depending on the ability and needs of each child.

Planning starts with the Long-Term Plans for continuous provision, which highlights the resources, opportunities, experiences, events, books, songs and rhymes that are available all year.

Medium Term plans are written each half term and used by EYFS staff as guidance for learning opportunities for all children as well as identifying how to scaffold learning for those children who will need additional support, adaptions or further challenge.

Weekly planning outlines the main directed teaching and adult initiated activities particularly within phonics, maths and writing, which will link to other areas of learning and development. The planning allows the opportunity to be responsive to the need and interests of the children and is adaptable in the moment.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

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 Hillside Primary we recognise that each child develops in different ways at varying rates, but they can all be resilient, confident capable and achieving learners. They seek out new relationships, willing to develop and maintain these and have a built-in curiosity for life and learning. Each child brings with them their own unique understanding and experience of the world around them.

During the EYFS, the children are introduced to critical learning habits - to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. We consider the children's interests so that our direct instruction and teaching, support the purposeful learning opportunities we provide to the children.

Inclusion

Our children's attitudes and approach to learning are influenced by both home environments and school, therefore we ensure that from the time they start with us we build purposeful and positive links with the families. We value all our families, celebrate the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children and families are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning.

Teachers are aware of the need for our curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

Teachers understand that all children are entitled to a high quality of education and ensure that this happens by adapting, scaffolding and tailoring the learning opportunities to meet each child's individual needs. Planning for children with additional needs is in line with the Special Educational Needs & Disability policy and we have our SEND Pathways approaches to support this too.

Positive Relationships:

We understand that developing positive and secure relationships with others, helps our children to become confident and independent. Our staff develop and maintain positive and nurturing relationships with all children, building trust by listening and supporting children throughout their time with us.

Teaching is then built on the quality of these relationships between adults and children and we embrace the Ofsted definition of teaching:

"Teaching should not be taken to imply a top-down or formal way of working. It is a broad term, which covers the many different ways in which adults help children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges."

Teaching and Play in the Early Years: A balancing act. Ofsted August 2015

Parents as Partners

We recognise the important role parents play in educating the children. We do this by:

- Having yearly meetings with all the new parents before their child starts school.
- Holding a variety of stay and play sessions for parents and their children, so they can spend time in their new environment and with their teacher, before starting school.
- Running parent café's each half term, where we can share our approaches and strategies to phonics, maths and how we link in our other subjects discretely within our curriculum.
- Holding parent reading café's every 3 weeks, where they can support their child's development and love of reading.
- Communication with parents on Class Dojo daily to keep them updated on their child's learning.
- Encouraging parents to attend parent meetings to discuss their child's progress on two occasions throughout the year.
- Providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of the summer term.

Enabling Environments:

At Hillside Primary we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow the children to explore and learn securely and safely. Both the indoor and outdoor environments provide opportunities for open-ended learning and child-initiated activities, where they can develop a variety of skills and knowledge. We provide a range of stimulating resources which are accessible and open-ended so that they can be used in a variety of ways, incorporating an 80% familiar and 20% new, balance of resources. All our resources are carefully thought out and planned for, to ensure they support every area of learning, reflecting their interests and common play behaviours too.

Outdoors

Being outdoors is an essential part of children's wellbeing and development, whilst supporting all areas of learning and the characteristics of effective learning. The opportunities and resources outside are not the same as what is offered inside, allowing for more physical, active and larger scale play. The Nursery and Reception share a dedicated outdoor area, which is used all year round no matter the weather, and so outdoor clothing is needed. The school itself is on large grounds, which includes wooded areas, a garden, large climbing frame and pond/wildlife area, which all the children have access to.

Definitions:

Continuous provision – clearly defined areas inside and outside containing resources that have been planned to reflect children's interests and to promote the areas of learning and development. These are continuous as they are in place every day throughout the year.

Enhanced provision – The additions made to our continuous provision which enhance the experiences and opportunities. These may be books, pictures, resources, artefacts, visits and visitors. They are often added in response to children's interests and lines of enquiries as well as to promote an aspect of learning.

Learning and Development:

The characteristics of effective learning: These characteristics are the "how" of children's learning. They are vital for planning the environment and the experiences offered to the children. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners.

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. As they play they make sense of their world and bring together everything they are learning.
- **Active learning** - children concentrate, show high levels of involvement and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties. They enjoy achieving what they set out to do
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. They demonstrate independence being happy to take risks
- **High levels of wellbeing** – children feel at ease, are comfortable and relaxed. Their basic needs are being met and they look happy and cheerful. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. They are open and accessible to the environment and new experiences. They express self-confidence and self-assurance.

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul." - Friedrich Froebel **(Play Matters 2025)**

Children's play allows them to widen their range of varied interests and preoccupations. Whilst playing, children are able to be inquisitive, creative, experimental and will learn at their own highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development. Through play children can understand the world around them and make links between everything they are learning.

The adults model play using a combination of the shREC approach and Perfect play partner, to help expand children's knowledge and techniques which support their learning. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge the risks for themselves. We explain and model how we get better at things, by being resilient, putting in effort and persisting even when things go wrong. They practice these ideas and develop them, learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. We encourage risk taking and problem solving.

"Practitioners cannot plan children's play, because this would work against the choice and control that are central features of play. Practitioners can and should plan for children's play, however, by creating high-quality learning environments, and ensuring uninterrupted periods for children to develop their play." **(Learning, Playing and Interacting DCSF 2009)**

5. Assessment

At Hillside Primary, 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. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers.

When a child starts Nursery aged 3, staff use the Development Matters Observation Checks to observe if the children are where they would expect them to be at this age. This is then reviewed half way through the year

and again at the end of the year, to ensure a good level of progress. At the end of the year parents/carers are given a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

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
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

At the end of Reception, the Early Learning Goals are reported to the Department of Education indicating whether a child is still emerging into the achievement of the goals, or at the expected level. A Good Level of Development based on the Prime Areas plus Literacy and Maths is used to identify children who may need additional support or greater challenge as they move into Year 1.

The online assessment enables us to be able to assess whether a child is operating at a typical level for their chronological age which ensures that a child is not labelled as lower ability when they are simply one of the youngest in their class. A child may not achieve GLD or a certain early learning goal but this may not be a source of concern if they are demonstrating knowledge, skills and behaviours that are typical for their age.

6. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We understand 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' (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021).

At Hillside Primary there are clear procedures for assessing risk 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 line with the EYFS statutory framework 2021, at Hillside Primary School we undertake;

- Supporting pupils with Medical conditions policy
- Relevant training provided for staff where the administration of medicine or medical knowledge is needed.
- Written records of medical or personal care procedures
- Fresh drinking water is available at all times.
- Children's dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when necessary
- Fruit is provided during the morning in Reception. Milk and fruit are provided at snack time in Nursery.
- A paediatric first aider is accessible at all times, including when children are eating.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

Staff and visitors (including parents), do not use their mobile phones or personal handset devices within the classroom and are prohibited from taking photographs. Staff do use school iPads to take photographs as evidence of children's learning in the EYFS. These photographs are used in the class learning journey's, on the school website and on our Class Dojo platform. All parents/carers are asked to state if they give permission for their child's image to be used on the school website or Facebook page etc. through the paperwork in their initial starter pack.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the EYFS leader and Headteacher every 3 years
At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of policies and procedures linked to the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See safeguarding policy on the school website – policies page
Procedure for responding to illness & Administering medicines policy	See health and safety policy & Supporting pupils with Medical conditions policy on the school website-policies page
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy on the school website-policies page
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See safeguarding policy on the school website-policies page
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Attendance policy on the school website-policies page
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy on the school website-policies page
Nursery Admissions policy	See Nursery Admissions and Charging Policy on the school website-policies page
Expectations of teaching and learning	See teaching learning and assessment policy on the school website-policies page