



# Heathfield Primary School

## Early Years Policy

***Our Mission Statement:  
Learning together, Learning for Life***

<b>Chair of Governors</b>	
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<b>Committee Responsible</b>	Early Years

## INTRODUCTION

At Heathfield, our curriculum lays out the way we teach our children to achieve our mission statement;  
*Learning together, learning for life.*

The curriculum consists of all the planned activities and routines that we organise in order to promote learning, confidence and self-esteem. We ensure there is a balance of adult led and child initiated activities to ensure children have time to explore their own ideas. It includes not only the formal requirements of the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, but also the range of extra-curricular activities that the school organises in order to enrich the experience of the children. The children at Heathfield are provided with an inter connected curriculum that promotes meaningful connections between concepts and knowledge (**Heathfield Head**), develops genuine and robust character traits to prepare children for life in the modern world (**Heathfield Heart**) and opportunities for children to use and apply their Head and Heart to answer questions (**Heathfield Hands**) resulting in knowledgeable, physically and mentally healthy children that achieve their potential and have a solid foundation to become life-long learners.



## RATIONALE

Our school is in full agreement with the values statement included in the introduction to the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We have implemented a list of subject specific 'I can' statements which are used alongside the statutory framework and the Early Years Outcomes. These are the main values of the early years at Heathfield, upon which we have based our curriculum. The Early Years curriculum aims to provide:

- an inter connected curriculum that enables our children to make meaningful connections
- an ambitious curriculum for all learners
- holistic development for all children
- develop the characteristics of effective learning (Heathfield Heart)
- the cultural capital children need to succeed in the modern world
- building on new learning through reviewing and revisiting prior learning

We are committed to our mission statement; Learning Together, Learning for Life. In this regard, we want to structure our Early Years curriculum in a way that offers the children the knowledge, understanding and skills to become lifelong learners. The curriculum enables children to apply their knowledge and skills to different areas of learning.

## LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy reflects the requirements of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, which all early years settings in England must abide by.

It also reflects requirements for inclusion and equality as set out in the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014 and Equality Act 2010, and refers to curriculum-related expectations of governing boards set out in the Department for Education's Governance Handbook.

In addition, this policy acknowledges the requirements for promoting the learning and development of children set out in the Early Years Outcomes document.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES (SUBJECT LEADER)**

- Alongside the curriculum lead, provide strategic direction for the subject;
- Evaluate progress made and draw up appropriate action points to develop their subject;
- Support and offer advice to colleagues on issues related to their subject area;
- Monitor pupil progress in that subject area;
- Provide efficient resource management for the subject.

It is the role of the Early Years lead to keep up to date with developments in their subject, at both national and local level. The curriculum leader and Early Years lead monitor the way the subject is taught in the school and plan for improvement. This development planning links to whole-school priorities. The Early Years lead completes a subject SEF then plans actions based on the outcomes from the SEF. They ensure that there is full coverage of the Statutory Framework and 'I can' statements and that there is a clear skills progression. (See subject leader documents for how this is mapped out throughout school).

### **CURRICULUM INTENT**

Our Early Years curriculum is designed to promote a positive attitude towards learning, so that children enjoy all subjects, and acquire a solid basis for lifelong learning;

Teachers have a sound understanding of children's unique starting points. The curriculum is coherently planned based on children's needs, interests and carefully considered outcomes. This is derived from Quality texts and experiences of the wider world. At Heathfield, we recognise the importance of providing children with high quality texts as this is an essential way to build a wide and rich vocabulary and supports long term memory. Research suggests that long term memory depends on meaning, unless children can make sense of what they are exposed to the new knowledge cannot make its way in to the long term memory. As a result of research we ensure we provide opportunities to support long term memory development through quality texts. These opportunities include:

- Practical first hand experiences
- Nursery rhymes and familiar stories to reinforce memory through plentiful repetition
- Actions, signing, physical activity and movement
- Stories with repeated phrases
- Role play
- Sequencing
- Retrieval and recall

Stories are repeated and revisited as we believe that repetition is important. However, practitioners are aware that it needs to be meaningful and that by using the strategies above, we ignite a love of stories and rhymes to ensure children want to hear stories again and again.

Through the use of 'I can' statements, skills and knowledge are coherently planned and sequenced, ensuring all areas are taught in a logical progression. Practitioners have high academic ambitions and the curriculum provides no limits or barriers. Knowledge and skills are taught directly and learning is not left to chance.

The 7 areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected. The 3 prime areas (Communication and Language, Physical development and Personal, social and emotional development) are particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and start their journey to 'lifelong learning'. The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding of the world, Expressive arts and design.

The Early Years Outcomes and 'I can' statements support practitioner assessments, for children with SEND the Developmental Journal will be used. Next steps are identified and scaffolded by practitioners incidentally through daily practice. They are formally identified termly and are specific to children's individual needs and stage of development.

Parents are aware of their children's progress and how this can be developed at home. This is communicated weekly via tapestry resulting in frequent dialogue around children's learning and next steps. Parents contribute to children's learning journeys and are fully involved in the school community.

The outdoors is carefully planned, and reflects the learning that is taking place indoors on a larger scale. Opportunities to explore the natural world are integrated into daily practice. At Heathfield we recognise the importance for children to have access to natural space and we understand that not all families will have access to this at home. Playing and learning outside improves children's physical and emotional wellbeing, as well as supporting all areas of learning and development. Some key skills children gain from our forest schools sessions include:

- self-awareness
- motivation
- communication skills
- independence
- physical skills including the development of both gross and fine motor skills
- problem solving and risk taking
- resilience
- concentration
- knowledge and understanding of the changing world around them

Forest school sessions are linked to a quality text. These texts are used as a hook to ignite children's interests, however, children also have the opportunity for free exploration, taking their learning in their own direction.

Teaching is designed to help children remember long term what they have been taught and to integrate their knowledge into wider concepts. Children talk about what they already know and pose their own questions about the world.

Children's personal, social and emotion development, along with health and self-care, are built into every aspect of the child's experiences within Early Years and provide a basis for a solid healthy start physically and mentally.

Practitioners introduce children to a wide range of vocabulary. Children are exposed to high quality speech and language sessions.

At Heathfield Primary, through high quality teaching, we develop the following character traits to ensure children are effective lifelong learners (See Early Years Heathfield Heart links).

## **CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

The long-term plan indicates the quality texts that drive the curriculum to incorporate the 'I can' statements. In Reception, we follow the maths White Rose scheme of work (see Maths policy).

The medium-term plans give clear guidance on how the quality text(s) will be used to plan and deliver the knowledge and skills, including key vocabulary. Plans are based on prior knowledge from previous year groups ensuring key concepts are interweaved.

Short term plans are completed weekly for Maths, Literacy and continuous provision. They identify how the 'I cans' will be specifically met to meet individual needs of the cohort, considering children's prior learning, next steps and interests. Teachers set clear expectations for groups of children that support and challenge their stage of development.

Non negotiables for each area in all year Early Years classes are in place (see non- negotiables tables). This ensures children are given the opportunity to develop and practise skills linked to the 'I can' Statements. It also identifies key subject specific language. Provision in all year group progresses throughout the year, the 'I can' statements are used to guide this progression.

Clear guidance is given to class teachers on how to deliver the content of the curriculum for Early Years. It is implemented by:

- Baselines are completed and moderated to ensure accurate judgements are made
- PLPs are in place for all children with SEND and quality first teaching is in place, along with specific interventions which are closely monitored
- Staff present information clearly to children promoting appropriate discussion, addressing misconceptions
- Floor books are used to capture the learning process for children to reflect upon, pose their own questions to answer as a class
- Children record work in individual exercise books commensurate with time of year
- A range of guided and open ended activities are planned, that are relevant to and widen children's experiences, using the natural times of the year to enhance learning
- Next steps for the youngest children, and those with more specific needs, are focused on the prime areas of learning. To ensure school readiness, next steps in Reception are then based on Maths and Literacy
- All observations are accessible for parents on Tapestry, and next steps are shared along with ideas of how these can be supported at home
- Children are taught about health and where food comes from, exercise and rest and importance of being physically and mentally healthy
- A range of language intervention tools are in place and children working below age related expectations receive this regularly
- Children are assessed at regular intervals by their key person or class teacher (Reception)
- Staff are experts in teaching systematic synthetic phonics. Phonics begins with our youngest children through speaking and listening activities, moving them on to initial sound, blending and segmenting in Nursery in preparation for a more formal approach in Reception.
- White Rose is used across Early Years to support the discrete teaching of maths and to ensure the opportunity for purposeful and real life maths within provision
- Subject specific vocabulary is displayed within the classroom to prompt staff
- Opportunities in the outdoors link to the long term plans and current learning to ensure a purposeful and engaging experience
- A thoughtful balance of direct whole-class teaching, small groups and one to one, and continuous provision gives children the opportunity to practise skills and apply knowledge in a variety of contexts
- Curriculum summaries give parents information about what children will learn each term. Parents are invited into school frequently to observe and support their children within the provision.

## **IMPACT**

Our Early Years Curriculum is high quality, well thought out and is planned to demonstrate progression.

This leads to:

- A reflection on standards achieved against the planned outcomes;
- Children meeting or exceeding the Good Level of Development
- Children demonstrate Characteristics of effective learning
- Accelerated progress for children working below age related expectations
- Children's readiness for Year 1 national curriculum

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Children's discussions about their learning – Pupil Voice
- Triangulation of monitoring (observations, books, pupil voice, learning walks, on the pulse monitoring)