

Horton Lodge Special School

'Working Hand in Hand to Achieve Potential'



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Approved By: Governing Board

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Introduction

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2021 states that four guiding principles should shape practice in Early Years settings. These are:

- 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

These principles that guide Early Years settings, support children as they grow up happy, healthy, curious and ready for the next stage of their education.

The quotes below sum up much of what the Early Years provision at Horton Lodge stands for - that is providing a warm, positive, nurturing start to education where children feel they have a voice.

“High-quality early education and childcare plays a positive role by helping children to become more resilient. A key factor which helps children to overcome adversity is having warm, positive and nurturing relationships.....This can help children to become stronger and more resilient over time.”

“The experience of the child must always be central to practitioners’ thinking. This requires the organisation to take positive steps to make time for practitioners to reflect on the experiences of the children. Practitioners need to think about the ‘child’s voice” (“Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage - Principles into Practice’ Julien Grenier 2020)



Aims

At Horton Lodge Special School we use the principles and ethos of Conductive Education to promote learning and development. Explicit links can be made between the overarching principles of the Early Years Foundation Scheme (EYFS) and the principles of Conductive Education; this can evidently be seen across the school day within the Explorers Classroom.

It is our intention to give each and every child that starts Horton Lodge the opportunity to reach their full potential, ensuring that there are no assumptions or ceiling to a child's progress and achievements at such an early stage in their educational journey.

Children are given opportunities to demonstrate their achievements through mixed ability play and socialisation. We do not categorize children into pre-determined curriculum pathways at this stage in their development journey as research has shown that, at this stage, children make the most progress when they learn alongside peers with differing learning and social skills. Children are also given daily opportunities for child-initiated play with their peers, with different adult-led teaching opportunities interspersed throughout the day. In this way, children are challenged academically in subject specific areas that are suitable, such as in phonics and numeracy and some are given focused sensory based interventions that are appropriate to their needs.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum following the principles of the EYFS, giving them an extensive range of knowledge and skills needed to promote progress throughout their school journey and when moving forward into adulthood.
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress from their own personal starting point.
- A close working partnership between staff, parents and/or carers as well as other professionals such as Physiotherapists, Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy and Multi-Sensory Impairment services.



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- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the **Early Years Framework 2023**:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1170108/EYFS_framework_from_September_2023.pdf

Structure of the EYFS

Induction

Our EYFS department caters for children from the age of 3. The individualised induction programme aims to make the transition into school life as smooth as possible for all children and their parents. Hence, we arrange:

- A visit and tour of the school and an opportunity to meet with staff working in the EYFS
- The opportunity to attend the 'School for Parents' weekly session
- Transition meetings with parents and professionals to gather important information to help children to settle into school
- A staff visit to the child's existing setting and/or their homes to establish a feel for what the child looks like in an already established and safe setting
- Provide parents and staff an opportunity to co-operate in creating an 'all about me' profile to aid transition and understanding of the 'whole child'
- Opportunities for children to spend time in school, both with and without their parents

The manner in which children are introduced to the school depends on their individual needs. Some children visit over a period of time with and without their parents. Other children build up from half days without their parents. Once children are attending school without their parents, daily contact is maintained using the Seesaw app, through which parents can see photographs of their child happy and achieving in school, and information about the child can be passed between home and



school on a daily basis. We encourage parents to be part of their child's school life and provide a range of partnership opportunities both formal and informal.

Staffing and Organisation of Classes

The EYFS is led by a Teacher and supported by a team of Teaching Assistants and 1:1 Teaching Assistants if required. At Horton Lodge, we uphold strong working relationships with experienced staff with specialist knowledge and skills. Staff can therefore, draw on support from others such as Conductor Teachers, subject leaders and other experienced staff. We also work closely with other professionals and have a very secure multiagency approach. We benefit from specialists coming into the classroom and working with the children to aid their learning and provide advice and support for the whole class team. Outside agencies include:

- Physiotherapists - they are an integral part of the staff team and spend time working with the children to develop physical skills and provide Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff.
- Swimming Teacher - children benefit from specialist teaching from a qualified swim instructor on a termly basis
- Special School Nurse
- Speech and Language Therapists
- Teacher for Hearing and Visually Impaired Pupils
- Occupational Therapists
- Educational Psychologists, as well as other professionals as needed.

Organisations will change annually depending on the number and needs of the children. However, we will endeavour to recognise pupils individualised needs whilst ensuring all children have equal access to activities regardless of age, ability, gender or race (see Equal Opportunities Policy).

It is widely accepted that children learn best in an environment which is safe, stimulating and comfortable. Within Early Years, the class is set up to encourage social interaction and play using



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adapted areas linked to the areas of learning. Children have access to a motivating role play area that is changed on a termly basis, a sensory corner, a reading corner, an ICT area, toy area and adult led teaching area. The Early Years Foundation Stage is organised into times in which the children take part in teacher led activities, and times in which they can choose from a variety of carefully planned activities based within the seven areas of learning. Learning activities are planned by the teacher with input from the rest of the team.

Links with the Community

We understand that visits and links with the community are both enriching experiences and an opportunity for children to prepare for future opportunities moving into adulthood. We value repeated visits so that children have the best possible chance at learning how to access their community in the future. This includes accessing public places such as going to the café or going to the shop to buy something. Each visit enables children to learn the skills from across the curriculum areas such as social communication, money, reading timetables, road safety and personal organisation. It is also vital that our children feel a sense of 'belonging' within their community and therefore we promote inclusion within the community within a variety of ways:

- Exploring the local environment through educational visits related to specific topics and the interests and needs of the children in the group at any one time.
- Visits from the people in the local community who come to talk to the children
- Opportunities to engage with local PAT dogs Jack and Minnie.
- Our school social media page to promote what we do within our community and develop people's perceptions of our setting.
- Topic and RE assemblies.
- Links with other schools such as our local primary school Horton St Michael's.

Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape the EYFS Curriculum at Horton Lodge Special School. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and



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are therefore, delivered through a thematic approach, with an appropriate balance across all the EYFS aspects. We offer opportunities throughout the day to facilitate learning in all seven of these areas, accepting that, for example, during a lesson focused on physical development, learning linked to any of the other areas may be identified. Pupils work on their early developmental skills in communication and interaction, physical development and personal, social and emotional development (prime areas) as well as cognition and learning skills (linking to specific areas of the EYFS).

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage the pupil's individualised curriculum begins to dovetail into one of the three main pathways used throughout the rest of the school:

- Pre-Formal Curriculum
- Semi-Formal Curriculum
- Formal Curriculum

The EYFS curriculum is supported by specialist schemes/frameworks appropriate to the level of a pupil's development e.g. Equals (Assessing and Recording in the EYFS), Birth to Five and the Early Years Foundation Stage including the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Overall, there is an emphasis placed on promoting and sustaining independence with an additional focus on what pupils need to know in order to progress within their journey. We utilise a three year whole school curriculum topic cycle (Appendix 1) which incorporates:

- Knowledge about themselves & topics of immediate interest (family and school)
- Knowledge about life beyond their immediate environment (other people and places)
- Skills and knowledge to become active and curious, independent and positive citizens

We acknowledge the importance of allowing the curriculum to be driven by the interests of pupils and for this reason it is flexible whilst retaining its ambitious nature. Our curriculum intent demonstrates our commitment to depth of learning in key areas and generalisation, independence, fluency and maintenance of skills (MAPP Assessment of Lateral Progress), rather than the need to cover a whole range of things in a superficial way.



We recognise that the way in which the curriculum is presented must be constantly monitored and adjusted according to the needs of the group of learners at the time. Key to our planning is that children within our EYFS will need structured play sessions as well as opportunities for free play and social interaction. These are repeated sessions that consist of a sequence of exploration activities that involve using all of the senses. We recognise that children need to learn the ‘characteristics of effective learning’ through repetition and modelling, and how to make use of their senses and organise their sensory motor learning, before playing independently and in more purposeful ways. The classroom is organised to enable pupils to be as independent as possible, following the ethos of Conductive Education alongside the Characteristics of Effective Learning. Children are shown and taught different ways of moving around using the apparatus set up in the classroom.

It is recognised that Communication is the key to progress and the EYFS provides an environment where children learn that they have a voice; they are valued and can make choices confidently. We aim to embed a communication system that fits for each child, whether it be providing a PODD book, encouraging the use of a number of signs or becoming familiar with Objects of Reference linked to routines and activities across the day. An integral approach followed to build safe and secure relationships, develop the fundamentals of communication and also promote social skills is Intensive Interaction. All children, no matter what their current communication level, benefit from this strategy as a means to build meaningful relationships and social skills at such an early stage in their learning journey.

Technology is recognised as being an integral part of the curriculum. It is adapted for children’s individual needs. The role that this plays in our school in terms of communication is key and therefore children are encouraged to develop their access skills right from the start.



Teaching and Learning

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. As children grow older, and as their development may allow, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning or the curriculum pathway they move onto.

Assessment and Progress

At Horton Lodge, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. We understand the importance of providing a holistic picture of each child's unique learning journey. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of engagement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also consider observations shared by parents and/or carers and discussions between home and school are valued in shaping the whole picture of the child.

Within the first half term that a child **starts reception**, staff will undertake a baseline assessment. This may be in the form of the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) or often we find it more appropriate to baseline using our own observational notes, plotting these against a framework that fits with the pupil's current development level (Equals Skills Maps or Birth to Five). Within the first half term, observations help to inform staff shape individualised learning plans (IEPs and next steps). The typical observation period is 6-8 weeks as it is crucial to begin building secure foundations and relationships above all else, this is proven in research showing that children can only learn and progress when their basic needs are met.

- At Horton Lodge, all pupils will have EHCP and IEP targets. We also use MAPP - 'Assessment of Lateral Progress' of Next Steps/ targets linked to EHCPs, when the skill is baselined and graded and then revisited and graded again – this is what we will use to guide our conversations of progress during the termly IEP review meetings and the annual review of your child's EHCP. A report is written detailing progress every 6 months, when a review of



the EHCP takes place (when the child is under 5) or annually (once the child is 5 years of age). Individual interventions and sessions, target children’s next steps on a weekly basis so that children are able to show progress towards the identified target area.

- As well as using children’s EHCPs and IEPs to guide assessment, pupils will also have individual targets and next steps for each area of the EYFS. This can vary based on the child’s current level of development (please see templates below). Next steps may be taken from our new Equals EYFS skills maps or Birth to Five (2021), and may also include Characteristics of Effective Learning, but all targets will link to the seven areas of learning identified in the EYFS

Childs Picture	PSED
	Communication and Interaction
	Physical
IEP and EHCP outcomes	Literacy
	Maths
	UW
	Expressive arts and design

Childs Picture	PSED
	Communication and Interaction
	Physical
IEP and EHCP outcomes	My Cognition and Learning skills- incorporating specific areas and Characteristics of effective learning

- Learning Journeys are used to document pupil’s observations - often these are formed using the ‘Evidence for Learning’ tool. These observations will then be linked to children’s individual IEP/EHCP/next steps as well as other frameworks to support such as Birth to Five and Equals Skills Maps. Tags are used to evidence certain areas such as the Characteristics of Effective Learning or when a piece of evidence links to a specific area such as Conductive Education, AAC, Rebound, Swimming etc.
- Each child has a ‘Learning Journey’ documented on the Seesaw app, where parents are informed regularly by school about achievements and things that their child particularly enjoys at school, as well as their day-to-day wellbeing. Parents make a valuable contribution to this by adding their own comments and photos as the year goes by. Staff believe that this form of documenting achievement is valuable as it allows for a two way informal discussion as required regarding progress.



- We also use Scales of Wellbeing and Involvement, which are designed to provide a quick and easy way of capturing a child’s level of social and emotional needs and their level of engagement as they start school or nursery. Recording of these levels will be based on observations within the first few days or weeks, and for those children whose wellbeing and/or involvement are very low, recording using the scale should show a gradual progression as they start to settle into their new environment, adapt to routines and form meaningful attachments. At Horton lodge we believe pupil’s wellbeing to be paramount, and therefore termly captures of how a child’s emotional wellbeing is developing is vital to inform next steps. These captures are not only completed by the class teacher but by the whole team and discussed on a regular basis. Staff may find it appropriate to include pictures and short annotations to show what regulation or involvement looks like for that particular child.

SCALES OF WELL-BEING AND INVOLVEMENT

05.09.2022 | 07.10.2022 | 12.12.2022 | 09.02.2023 | 24.05.2023 | DATE COMPLETED:

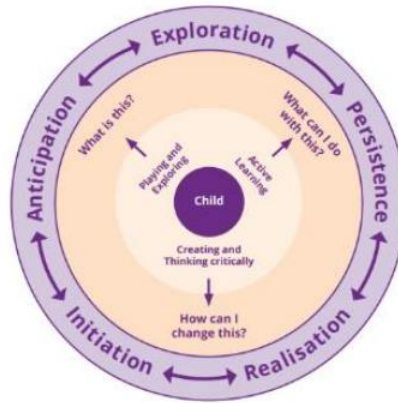
MY INVOLVEMENT

LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	EXTREMELY HIGH
Emerging Involvement: activity is fleeting, child soon loses interest and is easily distracted	Partly Involved: some signs of intermittent and developing involvement	Mostly Involved: continuous activity with occasional and brief distraction	Fully Involved: continuous and persistent activity with full concentration, motivation and enjoyment.
1	2	3	4

MY WELL BEING

LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	EXTREMELY HIGH
Less Explicit Distress: signs of discomfort not expressed the whole time. Child is still not fully at ease and extremes of behaviour and tension may be evident at times	Passive Emotion: child shows little or no emotion; no obvious signs of discomfort for most of the time and some coping strategies and settling behaviours are emerging	Mostly Settled: increasing satisfaction and self-confidence. Child demonstrates pleasure and appears relaxed most of the time. May still react to changes in the environment, but can adjust	Consistently Relaxed and Settled: child is happy, demonstrates high levels of self-confidence and self-assurance. Signs of tension are rare and child is open to interactions and accepts the changing environment
1	2	3	4

- The Engagement Model provides links between EYFS characteristics and areas of engagement to support assessment and observations. We use it to identify and celebrate all pupils’ progress, including linear and lateral progress, the consolidation and maintenance of knowledge, skills and concepts and the prevention or slowing of a decline in pupils’ performance, whilst recognising that a minority of pupils may have a regressive condition. Creating a link between The Engagement Model and Characteristics of Effective Learning can also be of importance when transitioning onto the next curriculum model. For this reason, an engagement profile will be created within the final term to aid transitioning.



EYFS Characteristics:	Areas of Engagement:
Playing & Exploring	Exploration Anticipation Realisation
Active Learning	Exploration Realisation Persistence
Creating & Thinking Critically	Exploration Realisation Initiation

MY EMERGING AREAS OF ENGAGEMENT

EXPLORATION

I am interested to look at colourful lights. Sometimes I will open my eyes wider when they are switched on.

REALISATION

When you speak to me directly, I will often acknowledge this by widening my eyes, opening my mouth and maybe even respond by moving my mouth and tongue or vocalising briefly.

ANTICIPATION

In some ready, steady, go activities I have shown that I am expecting something to happen again by widening my eyes and opening my mouth.

INITIATION

You can monitor my levels of comfort and discomfort by listening out for my vocalisations and watching my facial expressions.

PERSISTENCE

I will always try hard to participate in whatever you are asking me to do.

At the **end of the EYFS**, there is a statutory requirement for staff to complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Exceeding expected levels of development
- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')



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

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#) and Birth to 5 Matters) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

We see the importance of children being fully involved in evaluating their progress and we give immediate feedback to them to reinforce skills, develop an understanding of what they have achieved, and encourage them to develop internal motivation and be less reliant on external praise.

Working with Parents

We strongly believe that parents and carers are our partners in children's learning. We try to develop a close two way working relationship between home and school involving parents in their child's development as much as possible. Some of the ways we encourage this are:

- Adopting an 'open door policy' so that parents and teachers have the opportunity to chat informally at the beginning and end of the school day
- Welcoming parents to participate in swimming sessions on a termly basis
- Inviting children to our 'School for Parents' which may then lead to them joining Horton Lodge or supporting them to develop their child's physical needs
- Involving parents and carers as helpers for regular classroom activities and for special events such as educational visits within the local area or the Story Café sessions
- Building communication through home-school initiatives
- Weekly sending home of "Ed the Explorer" – Ed goes home with his own little book which has an introduction in how to use this and that you can send in pictures or a little piece of writing – the focus for this is sharing diversity at home and in their communities, adults from the class also do this to share their lives and experiences with the children too



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- Welcoming parents to informative 'coffee mornings' organised by the class teacher, school nurse, Family Link workers, where parents and carers are invited to come, meet and chat with each other
- Communication via the Seesaw app and phone calls as appropriate
- Formal consultation meetings held six-monthly (for under 5 year olds) or annually (once the child is 5 years of age) to discuss pupil progress against their EHCP outcomes
- Focussed parent workshops including the use of AAC and Conductive Education
- Parents evenings
- Family link roles on the Safeguarding team
- Whole school newsletter
- School website

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by following the [statutory guidance](#) for safety around supervised tooth brushing and work with the children daily after eating lunch. The rest of our EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare procedures are outlined in the range of whole school policies listed in Appendix 1. In particular these detail the procedures relating to the use of mobile phones and other similar portable devices within the setting to ensure that we offer protection for both children and staff in this area.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Emily Osborne, Early Years Area Lead on an annual basis. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.



Appendix 1: List of Statutory Policies and Procedures for the EYFS

Statutory Policy or Procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy 2023 • Attendance Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Policy • First Aid Policy
Administering medicines policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions (covering Administering Medicines)
Emergency evacuation procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Policy • Children’s Individual PEEP Plans
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy 2023 • Safer Recruitment Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policy 2023 • Child Missing in Education Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints Policy and Procedure

Policy Lead	Emily Osborne	Date	
Link Governor	Alison Lee	Date	
Chair of Governors	Jon Harris	Date	