



Early Years Policy 2023/24

Signed: Mrs P Lyall Headteacher

Signed Miss J Darmanin Chair of committee

Date approved: January 2024 (in response to the changes of the Early Years Framework)

Review date: October 2024 (In line with the publication of the Early Years Handbook)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Teaching and Learning, Child Protection, Safeguarding, Prevent, Administration of Medication, Intimate Care and Mobile Phones & Cameras in Early Years and Foundation Stage.

Please also refer to the Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage, (revised and applicable from 4th January 2024) and the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook 2024 Published October 2023.

Hyperlinks: [Early years foundation stage profile: 2024 handbook \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/123456/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-2024-handbook.pdf)

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school based providers \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/123457/eyfs-statutory-framework-for-group-and-school-based-providers.pdf) (applies from 4th January 2024)

Safeguarding statement of intent

Safeguarding all our children is of paramount importance to us therefore, all necessary risk assessments are carried out prior to any activity. Enhanced DBS checks are carried out when recruiting new staff or volunteers. When welcoming visitors we check whether they have a DBS and carefully monitor their contact with children according to the regulated activity rules in the DBS guidelines. We are a “Safer School” and at least one member of staff and governors who are involved in the recruitment process have attended “Safer Recruitment Training.” New staff are made aware of all the related Safeguarding documents including the Child Protection policy as part of the induction process and all staff receive Child Protection Awareness training regularly.

See section 3 of Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage – revised January 2024.

Introduction:

1.1 “All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.” (*Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage – published January 2024, Page 7*)

1.2 “The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. “(*Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage – published January 2024. Page 7*)

1.3 The aims of our EYFS setting (reception class) are guided by the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation stage 2024. This outlines that the foundation stage should enable children to become ready for school and that “school readiness” should be achieved. As is also specified in the same document the “EYFS seeks to provide”:

- “Quality and consistency in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress, and no child gets left behind. “
- “A secure foundation through planning for the learning and development of each individual child, and assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly. “
- “Partnership working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers. “

- " Equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported."
“(Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage – published January 2024. Page 7)

These are fundamental to the practise in the EYFS at Hodnet Primary School.

We also aim to:

- Establish a safe, happy and nurturing environment where children are happy to accept challenges, take risks and embrace school life.
- Create learning experiences which reflect children’s interests and strengths as a starting point, where children’s learning ideas are valued and respected. This will encourage children to be motivated and excited to learn and become confident and independent lifelong learners.
- Develop a language rich environment where conversations with peers and adults are encouraged and sustained in order to develop vocabulary, imagination and conversation skills.
- Create positive relationships where children feel they are valued, safe and respected.

The Curriculum

2.1 In the reception class at Hodnet Primary School we aim to provide a broad, balanced, differentiated and inclusive curriculum which meets the needs of children in the class in terms of social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within an enabling environment.

2.2 Throughout the EYFS we plan and create activities which enable us to deliver the educational programmes as detailed in the *Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage 2021* (pages 10, 11, 12). These activities give children varied, interesting and innovative learning experiences and opportunities; they give the children chances to work independently; accepting challenges and work with adults (both the teachers and teaching assistants in the class room). These learning experiences may take place in the indoor and outdoor classroom; children are able to access learning outdoors through our “free flow” classroom environment. We also aim to deliver learning experiences which help children develop key skills during our forest schools, gardening sessions, visits and experiences of the real world.

2.3 Our curriculum enables children to learn and develop skills in 2 main themes: prime areas and specific areas.

Prime areas:

Communication and Language. (CL)
Physical development (PD)
Personal, Emotional and Social Development. (PSED)

Specific areas:

Literacy.
Mathematics.
Understanding the World (UtW)
Expressive Art and Design (EAD)

In the Early years classroom we have a well planned learning environment where children are able to access these areas of the curriculum in their own playing to learn time, independently. During this time the adults who work in the classroom will scaffold, model, guide and teach new skills whilst being involved in the children's play. There is also a balance of specific guided learning time, in all these areas which ensure that children are taught the skills, knowledge and attitudes in order to develop as a learner.

From September 2018 we have begun developing a creative curriculum approach using some of the principles of the Reggio Emilia education philosophy. The children's learning opportunities will be planned around their key interests and specific areas of development. See the new curriculum overview.

Please also refer to Hodnet Early Years key curriculum documents:

Hodnet Primary School Early Years Curriculum

Hodnet Primary School Early Years Long term plan – 2023

Hodnet Primary School Early Years key Milestones document

Hodnet Primary School Early Years phonics overview (in line with Twinkl phonics scheme)

Hodnet Primary School Early Years Maths Mastery document

Hodnet Primary School Early Years Core rhymes document

Hodnet Primary School Early Years Core texts document

Hodnet Primary School Early Years Core experiences document

Assessment for learning

3.1 Assessment for learning is a vital aspect of the EYFS practise at Hodnet School, this is managed in three ways. When children enter the school adults working alongside them will assess their current level of skills in all of the curriculum areas, this will be recording on a working document which will provide information for developing children's next steps for learning. This will be informed by the National Baseline assessment, which will be carried out by the class teacher. Practitioners will use phonics tracker to assess children's level of progress in phonics, which is a key part of our Early Years curriculum. We will also converse with children's previous setting practitioners and adults at home in order to inform these observations.

3.2 Assessments will be recorded on working documents called "Check point documents", staff will identify children who are on track to reach the Early Learning Goal at the end of the academic year. Those children who will need extra support to reach this will be identified, strategies in order to support will be identified on these documents and then actioned in the classroom.

3.3 *Feedback in adult focus activities* - when children are working with an adult on a focused activity the adult will discuss the progress the child has made and together they will decide on the way in which the child can take their learning further and make steps of progress. Children will see the adults that they are working with as learners alongside themselves; they will talk alongside the child in order to make decisions.

3.4 *Observations and independent learning* - Children will have the opportunity to work independently on adult initiated tasks and child initiated tasks, the adults working alongside them will make observations of the children's progress whilst interacting with them. From these observations adults will plan opportunities for children to develop skills in the next step for learning. These may not necessarily be documented, staff will have valuable discussions with each other regarding the best ways to support the next steps and the best plans for individual children will be made. When it is seen as valuable to the child's development staff will use Tapestry Online Learning Journey to communicate this with each other and with parents if applicable.

3.4 Self-Assessment - A significant aspect of the EYFS practise is that children become aware of their own learning and are able to take charge of it, thus self-assessment and reflection is an important aspect of our practise. Children have regular opportunities to speak to their peers and adults working with them about what they are doing and evaluate their progress, setting themselves challenges and objectives for the future.

3.5 Sharing with parents and carers – adults at home will be kept up to date with their children’s progress through regular updates on our online learning platform Tapestry. We will address any learning and development needs with adults at home on a regular basis.

Safety

4.1 Children’s safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children’s safety.

Playing for learning

5.1 We feel that play is a fundamental element of the way in which young children learn and make progress. Through play children will develop skills and experiences which enable them to acquire skills which are vital in the development of the specific and prime areas of learning. Sometimes their play will be supported by other children and sometimes it will be supported by an adult but it is never meaningless or pointless.

Monitoring and Review

6.1 It is the responsibility of the early year’s foundation stage teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with each practitioner and to provide feedback to the governing body, raising any issues requiring discussion. The head teacher and subject coordinators carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring.

This policy was prepared by K. Akers & E.Noden and approved by the Curriculum and Standards Committee. It will be reviewed annually.