



*Challenge, Equality & Opportunity*

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

---

### Our Vision for Early Years

---

At Havannah First School, we greatly value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development. We firmly believe in giving our Reception children the best possible start to their school life. Our school family is nurturing and inclusive and our children are happy. Our children are excited and motivated to learn through rich and challenging learning experiences, they are able to develop skills through first hand experiences, as well as having opportunities to explore and take risks. We have high ambitions for all our children and recognise that children have different starting points to their learning. We plan according to children's stage of development so that all children can thrive and develop. We promote teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and give children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life. Our vision is to provide secure foundations to support children to become well-rounded individuals who are independent, resilient and confident members of our school family.

### Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the EYFS Statutory framework 2021.

### Aims

At Havannah First School, we aim to ensure that:

- We provide each child with a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can establish solid foundations and love of learning.
- All children are provided with secure foundations through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each child and are assessed and reviewed regularly. All children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- All children access quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress.
- We establish close partnerships between staff, children and parents/carers.
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

The EYFS is based upon four overarching 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 Early Years Staff and parents and/or carers;
- **Learning and Development**; children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

At Havannah First School, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all of our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning and well-being. To put these principles into practice, we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum which takes children's different stages of development into account.
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in partnership with parents.
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on individual needs, which are informed by observation and assessment.
- Provide a safe and secure learning environment.

*'When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.'* (Development Matters 2021)

## Structure of the EYFS

The term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. In this policy it is used to describe children who are in our Reception classes. We have 60 children in Reception and two Reception Classes. Each class has 30 children. We have four members of staff; two class teachers and two Teaching Assistants. Once our children are at school full time- usually in week two of the Autumn Term, our school day starts at 8.50am and finishes at 3.20pm.

## Areas of Learning

The EYFS curriculum is based on observations of children's needs, interests and stages of development. In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS. These are split into two sections – prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected and equally important.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, building their capacity to learn and to form relationships and thrive. These are:

- **Communication and Language**
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing Self
  - Building Relationships
- **Physical Development**
  - Gross Motor Skills
  - Fine Motor Skills

Early Years settings must also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

The EYFS Framework sets out educational programmes for each area of learning which include activities and experiences for children. These areas are delivered throughout our topics and are all linked closely together. They are equally important and dependent on each other. All areas are delivered through a broad and balanced curriculum. In the EYFS we deliver a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. The specific areas of learning provide children with a broad curriculum and with opportunities to strengthen and apply the prime areas of learning. This is particularly important in developing language and extending vocabulary.

We strongly value and promote outdoor learning in the EYFS. We have our own outdoor area and access to our forest school area which are used all year round in all weathers. Being outdoors encourages learning in different ways. It offers the children more opportunities to be creative, solve problems and explore on a larger scale, as well as to be physically active.

Activities and learning opportunities are planned with regard to three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things.
- Active learning – children concentrate, keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

## Planning

Our EYFS curriculum is a top-level plan of everything we want the children to learn. We also plan our curriculum to fulfil the whole school Intent.

Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital; the development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Our EYFS curriculum is ambitious and carefully sequenced to ensure children build on their learning over time. Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively. We use the EYFS Framework to inform planning. Each class plans together around topics which inspire and engage the children, whilst also allowing flexibility to incorporate the children's interests and stage of development. Whole class teaching, as well as small group adult directed activities are planned daily to ensure that children's needs are immediately responded to. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate. In planning and guiding children's activities, teachers reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

## Teaching

Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching. Play provides vital foundations for future learning and is the medium through which the Early Years Curriculum is experienced by children. At Havannah First School, the EYFS curriculum is delivered through a balance of child initiated play based activities and adult led and supported tasks. In

their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Teachers use both the classroom and outdoor areas to provide an exciting and stimulating environment. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for Year One.

## Phonics

At Havannah First School, we believe that all our children can become fluent readers. Phonics teaching and learning are a key part of the Foundation Stage and help to develop both early reading and writing skills. We teach reading through Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start the teaching of phonics in Reception and follow the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school. The sessions are delivered daily and build up from 10-minute lessons to 30 minutes. There are keep-up sessions following the phonics sessions for any children needing additional practice. Keep up sessions match the structure of the whole class session using the same procedures, resources, and vocabulary but in smaller steps with more repetition. These sessions are delivered by a TA or class teacher. The children are assessed using the Little Wandle assessment documents every six weeks to identify gaps in learning that need to be addressed. Teachers will also monitor progress and identify children who need additional support through ongoing daily assessments in class.

## Early Reading

We teach children to read through reading practice sessions, starting with two and building up to three times a week. These sessions usually start in Week 4 of the Autumn term. Each reading practice session is delivered by a trained teacher or teaching assistant and children use books which are matched to their secure phonic knowledge using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised assessments. The sessions have a clear focus, so that the demands of the sessions do not overload the child's working memory. The sessions focus on one of the three key reading skills: decoding, prosody and comprehension. We aim to instil a love of reading in every child. Books and stories are strongly valued and promoted throughout our school and we often use stories as a hook or starting point to our learning. Children are regularly exposed to books from the reading spine, core books, which have been specially chosen in order to ensure that our children experience texts which are challenging, stimulating and exciting for the children to share. Each classroom has an inviting book corner to entice children to read a wide range of books which are continually refreshed. Each class also has a daily reading voting station whereby children are given two books in the morning to choose from and they are able to 'vote' for the book they would like to hear at the end of the day.

As well as group reading practice sessions, children who have been identified as needing extra support with reading in Reception are heard to read on a 1 to 1 basis at least once a week. Our Year 4 'Reading Ambassadors' hear priority Reception readers once a week in addition to reading with adults. Parent volunteers also come in to listen to readers and provide extra opportunities for children to practise their reading skills. The decodable reading practice book is taken home each week to ensure reading success is shared at home. Reading for pleasure books are also sent home weekly for parents/carers to share and read to the children.

## The Teaching of Writing in Reception

At Havannah First School, we help our children develop as writers through direct teaching of writing and by providing lots of opportunities for them to practise their skills regularly right across the curriculum.

Children start their writing journey with us in Reception where children start writing as soon as they join our school. The teaching of writing is given a very high priority and children are given lots of opportunities to write throughout the day. In Reception, we use the EYFS Framework to inform planning. Each class plans together around a core text that is usually linked to the current theme for learning and where possible, writing experiences are linked to these learning themes. Within the EYFS, the planning for teacher led and self-initiated learning takes place on a daily basis as it is dependent on and informed by the children's interest and progress. Whole class teaching and small group adult directed activities are also planned for daily to ensure that children's needs are immediately responded to. Where appropriate, our writing lessons start with the reading of a high-quality text and we follow the principles of Pie Corbett's 'Talk4Writing'. This involves the learning and repeating of oral stories, building children's confidence to develop them through telling and then extending that development into writing; later creating 'new' stories orally as a preparation and rehearsal for writing.

### Provision

- Each classroom has a well organised writing area that includes a variety of different resources for mark making and writing such as large sheets of paper, coloured paper, notebooks, diaries, postcards, clipboards, whiteboards, pens, pencils, key words, topic words, alphabet cards, interactive displays, messages, examples of children's writing and links to the role play areas. These resources should be available for the children to use independently.
- Puppets, props and small world are available for role-play and story telling.
- Activities to develop children's fine and gross motor skills are provided e.g. building wrist strength by twirling ribbon sticks, practising writing patterns with big brushes and water, making letters in the sand.
- Inviting book corners have a good variety of well organised quality books.
- Displays celebrate children's achievements and support children's future learning. They include typed and handwritten text and captions from adults and children.
- There are daily phonics sessions with children taught in groups according to progress made and also daily English lessons. These are supported by linked independent and adult directed activities. They are clearly described on planning with the use of learning intentions and key questions, along with details of differentiation. Core texts are used and links to the learning theme are made where possible. Teachers plan daily to respond to the learning needs of the children. All children have a writing book and a handwriting and phonics book where directed writing activities are recorded. Self-initiated learning is recorded on Tapestry.

### The Teaching of Maths in Reception

Practical maths activities, number recognition and counting are incorporated into our daily routines in Reception. In addition to this, we deliver daily whole class maths sessions which are approximately 15 minutes long. We also deliver small group maths activities weekly which are adapted to provide support and/or challenge appropriate for each group of children.

### Provision

- We use White Rose Maths progression and planning documents to plan activities which develop problem solving skills and provide challenge to prepare the children for Year One and the Key Stage One Curriculum.
- We introduce Numicon from the beginning of Reception, so that children recognise the numerical value on sight and we aim for the children to be able to use this resource independently to support their understanding.

- Each Classroom has a maths table/area where children can use resources independently to explore aspects of number.
- Numbers and number lines are displayed clearly in each classroom and these are used and referred to on a daily basis
- Maths challenges linked to our learning are set out in our areas of continuous provision. Observations of the children accessing these challenges are recorded on Tapestry, this provides evidence of children's depth of understanding through their ability to work through these problems and challenges independently.
- Opportunities for active maths and problem-solving activities are provided through use of our outdoor areas.

## Inclusion and Our School Values

At Havannah First School, all children are valued as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. The EYFS curriculum is planned in order to meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace. We believe that positive, caring and strong relationships underpin and set the ethos of the Havannah First School family. We value every member and we work together to promote the values of respect, tolerance, understanding and cooperation.

We plan and deliver our EYFS Curriculum based on our core values of Challenge, Equality and Opportunity. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. Staff model co-operative play with peers, supporting the children to understand our school 'Golden Rules', which help to keep us all safe and happy. We are proud to be a No Outsiders School. Friendships are valued and nurtured throughout our school community and everyone is included. As well as following the No Outsiders programme, we make sure that children have access to books in the class libraries which depict different family structures and backgrounds so that children can see themselves reflected in books. We talk to the children about our 'Secrets of Success'; how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. The Secrets of Success help us to develop positive learning behaviours including perseverance, resilience, confidence, tenacity, questioning, reflection, collaboration, exploration. We believe in and foster an ethos of high expectations and high self-esteem for all. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves to encourage all to become independent problem solvers and decision makers. They have the opportunity to think and work creatively alongside other children as well as on their own.

## Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping the us to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, plan activities, and assess the need for support. Parents/carers will be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development by their class teacher. Formative assessments are used to assess the learning and development of children in the EYFS. Staff members will observe children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. This information will then be used to shape learning experiences for each child. Observations are recorded using Tapestry, an online learning journal. Every child has their own assessment portfolio made up of an online learning journal and paper-based evidence in phonics/writing books. Every member of staff within the early years can complete observations, which form a crucial part of assessment. This enables staff to monitor and assess children's progress as well as being an effective planning tool to ensure that the provision reflects the needs and interests of each individual learner. The use of our online assessment tool, Tapestry, allows parents constant access to their child's learning journal, to which they are strongly encouraged and supported to contribute their own assessments and celebrate their child's achievements.

At the end of Reception children are assessed by 17 Early Learning Goals which relate to the 7 areas of learning. Early Learning Goals (ELGs) are defined as the level of development children should be expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS. Teachers will indicate whether children are on track to achieve the goal or not on track each term. At the end of the year, class teachers will submit their judgements against each ELG, which will form the Early Years Profile. The profile will be shared with parents/carers at the end of the Reception year. Our EYFS Curriculum prepares children to progress with confidence towards the National Curriculum. Year One teachers will have access to the Profile report together with each child's end of year report, which includes skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. These will inform transition meetings between Reception and Year One teachers about each child's stage of development. It will identify learning needs and assist with the planning of activities at the start of Year One.

## A Partnership with Parents

At Havannah First School, we believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore we work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We use this information to support our assessments and share information about what children need to do next to develop and thrive. We want parents/carers to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our school and part of our Havannah school family. Our parents are welcomed and encouraged to be actively involved in their children's learning in school and are able to share learning experiences through:

- 'stay and play' sessions
- contributions to learning journals
- volunteering and parent workshops
- a parents/carers' evening held each term to discuss children's progress. We value this time, not only to share and celebrate the children's experiences at school, but also to hear from parents/carers and address any queries or concerns.

## Safeguarding

We know 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. We encourage pupil voice and ensure that our children feel valued and listened to. All staff in the setting are trained and work together as a team, with other staff and in particular with the DSL, to ensure that any concerns over children's welfare and safety are followed through appropriately. Our safeguarding and child protection procedures are outlined in our **safeguarding policy**.

We have risk assessments in place for aspects of our practice such as visits and the use of the outdoor environment. We also create individual risk assessments for children with additional needs which might put them at higher risk. We follow all of the school's policies relating to safeguarding, such as the intimate care policy and positive handling policy.

## Monitoring arrangements

Policy written by Rebecca Storey November 2021.

This policy will be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body every two years.

Reviewed: September 2022

Next review: Summer term 2023