



Hall Green Primary School

Early Years Policy

2024-2025

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- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The four 'specific' areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
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INTRODUCTION

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of our school 'Your Chance to Shine' and how we work to promote this. It gives a framework and guidance within which all staff work to promote resilience, honesty, ownership and respect.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage should underpin all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

Communication and language – Children will be given lots of opportunities to experience a rich language environment with all staff interacting and modelling language at every opportunity. Children will be given opportunities to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development – Children will be provided with lots of opportunities to be active and interactive; to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will be encouraged to become independent when feeding or dressing themselves.

Personal, social and emotional development – We will help children develop a positive sense of themselves and others. They will learn to form positive relationships and develop respect for others. They will learn how to develop social skills and how to manage their feelings and understand appropriate behaviour. Children to become confident in their own abilities and develop independence when managing their own personal needs. They will also be taught the importance of being healthy.

Literacy – Children will be given opportunities to enjoy songs and rhymes. They will be taught to link sounds and letters and begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interest.

Mathematics – Children will have lots of opportunities to develop and improve their skills of counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating and solving simple problems. They will be taught to describe shapes, patterns and to measure. They will also learn about routes and locations.

Understanding the world – Children will be guided to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. They will also learn to compare the past and the present.

Expressive arts and design – Children will explore a wide range of media and Materials. They will be provided with opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

3 QUALITY OF TEACHING

This will occur when:

~The child's home background and language is valued.

- Play is recognised as an important tool for children to develop and reflect on their learning. Play will be purposeful.
- There are plenty of opportunities for the children to talk about themselves and the world around them.
- They engage in first-hand experiences.
- Learning is well planned and the needs of the individual/group are the starting point. Children's own interests are taken into account and they are involved in the planning. Early assessments/baselines give these starting points. Characteristics of effective teaching and learning are considered (how children learn).
- Children have access to a variety of indoor and outdoor activities.
- Resources are accessible to all pupils.
- Special needs are identified as soon as possible and the appropriate measures taken to support the child's learning. Children are assessed at regular intervals and this is on-going.
- Partnership with parents and carers is positively addressed and is recognised as being vital to the development of the child.

4 QUALITY OF LEARNING

This will occur when:

- _ Children are motivated and instructions are clear.
- _ Children are able to access materials independently and encouraged to return them independently.
- _ Children take pride in their work and have high expectations.
- _ They are encouraged to reflect on and evaluate their work and that of their peers.
- _ Evaluation is used to raise the standard of their work.
- _ Everyone is involved in the child's development (parents/carers/adults/etc.)
- _ The materials are appropriate to the needs of the child and the learning experience.
- _ Transition between Early Years and Year 1 is smooth.

5 ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

The daily routine involves carpet time, small and large group activities and tidy up time. The children make choices about their activities and recognise that learning is a social interactive process between child, adult, materials and environment.

There is a balance of adult-led, adult initiated and child initiated activities, delivered though indoor and outdoor play.

Free Flow (Child Initiated Activities indoors and outdoors) – The adult's role during this time is to enter into the children's activities, extend learning and language skills and set up problem solving activities.

Also to observe how children gather information, interact with peers, and solve problems.

The children are encouraged to put away materials independently.

The children are given the opportunity to evaluate and recall their work in a variety of ways:

- _ Recall and recount problems encountered.
- _ Draw pictures or show models.
- _ Describe the activities undertaken simply.

CARPET/ CIRCLE TIME

This will take place every day for all children. Adults will spend time playing games, singing songs, finger rhymes, reading /telling stories, talking about special events etc.

SMALL GROUP TIME (adult-initiated)

This will take into account the needs, interests and abilities of the children.

Adults will:

- Extend the children's ideas.

- Model key vocabulary/Ask open-ended questions.
- Set up additional problem solving activities.
- Introduce new materials.
- Help children practise new skills.

This small group time will incorporate Phonics/Literacy/Mathematics work and will be planned according to the needs of the group of children.

6 THE EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM

The Nature of Learning

Children learn through play. Play is child's work and provides vital foundations for future learning. Play is the medium through which the Early Years curriculum is experienced by children. It demands from the children concentration, perseverance and mental and physical effort. Young children learn by experience. They need to look, touch, smell, listen, taste and explore with a variety of play materials.

Within the group, all children are supported in developing their potential at their own pace.

By means of developmentally appropriate activities and adult support, the curriculum leads to Early Learning goals and prepares children to progress with confidence towards the National Curriculum.

The Early Years Curriculum is an active learning programme, which recognises that learning is a social interactive process between the child, adults, materials and the environment.

The programme emphasises:

- _ Positive adult child interaction.
- _ A child-friendly learning environment in which children are free to pursue and develop their ideas and share their discoveries with others.
- _ A consistent daily routine.
- _ Team-based child assessment.

Key elements of this approach include a supportive climate in which control is shared between children and adults, a focus on children's strengths, i.e. what they can do, and know and a problem-solving approach both to work and dealing with social conflict.

Throughout the day adults are able to focus on the unexpected and spontaneous and to look for opportunities to help children clarify their understanding and extend their thinking, for example, by offering additional materials which might help children broaden their goals.

The process of education is as important as the content of the curriculum, i.e. when the children are actively engaged in first hand experiences and are able to observe, explore and take risks, they are learning how to learn and are developing self-esteem and independence .

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

(Self-Regulation, Managing Self & Building Relationships)

We see this area as of paramount importance, within a secure and stimulating environment children are supported in developing self-esteem and the confidence to work, co-operate and establish relationships with others in a group outside the family.

The children are encouraged to:

- _ Make and express choices.
- _ Demonstrate independence in selecting activities and resources.
- _ Explore new learning.
- _ Take control and responsibility for their actions and needs.
- _ Use initiative and their developing powers of reasoning to solve the problems they encounter in their work.
- _ Develop the perseverance to engage in increasingly complex play, working sometimes independently and at other times collaboratively with increasing concentration.

The same problem-solving approach applies to areas of social conflict where children are supported in verbalising their feelings, acknowledging and respecting the needs of others and working towards mutually acceptable solutions so that they develop an understanding of both self, and the part they play in a group and of what is right and wrong and why.

Adult example and support, activities, stories and the sharing of experiences help to develop

an understanding of a range of feelings and care for all living things, property and the environment.

The children are introduced to concepts of: sharing, caring, honesty, relationships, kindness, feeling and empathy. We are also very keen to respect and celebrate religious festivals.

Managing Self

Children are also made aware of their own health and hygiene through daily routines of hand washing, eating fruit, focus tasks or activities and discussions about why exercise, dental hygiene and a healthy diet is important.

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE

(Listening, Attention & Understanding & Speaking)

Children are encouraged to extend their vocabulary, fluency and listening skills by hearing, participating in having fun with and responding to stories, songs and rhymes, some of which they will commit to memory.

Children talk with others and ask questions about personally meaningful experiences. They plan their work for

the session, communicate with others during work time and describe events, objects and relationships when evaluating their work.

Adult-initiated activities in small and large groups familiarise children with the pattern, rhythm of language and introduce them to early work on listening skills, letter and sound recognition.

Through role-play the children develop language skills by using different modes and styles of speaking for different people and situations. They need to listen to each other's contributions and learn to play co-operatively.

LITERACY

(Comprehension, Word Reading & Writing)

Mark-making/ Writing

In an environment rich in print and opportunities to write, our goal is to help children to understand the power of the written word as a basis for communication, knowledge acquisition and entertainment and, when they are ready, to encourage children to use written and drawn symbols for themselves in drawing, letter-like forms, invented spellings, dictated stories and emergent writing.

A variety of mark-making implements for drawing and writing are offered to the children and they are encouraged to draw and write about things which interest them and which they want to communicate.

Mark-making is a very important and necessary stage in the development of early literacy. Emergent writing is positively encouraged so that children learn to communicate in the written form.

Every child's work is valued and respected. The children are encouraged to use mark-making tools in all areas, in the form of shopping lists, telephone pads, letters and notes.

We encourage and help each to transfer its spoken language into the written form. The level of writing is matched to each child's ability. This also includes scribing for the children to enable them to compose at length.

As the children gain in competence, their random marks become more precise, left to right orientation becomes apparent and their writing begins to contain recognisable letters.

Children who are beginning to write independently are supported in their attempts by helping them to identify the initial letter sound of the work required. As competence increases, they are encouraged to discriminate and represent further sounds in these words.

Children whose finer motor skills need a lot of input are encouraged to use fat crayons, paints, clay, dough and small manipulative toys to develop finer muscle tone in their fingers.

The children are introduced to handwriting patterns and individual letter formation. Writing is practised in the air, on paper, in sand, with paints, on white boards and is developed indoors and outdoors through the Kinetic Letters programme.

Reading

We encourage our children to love and respect books. Every day, a member of staff will share books with the whole class and at other times with individuals or small groups as required. We aim to share: fairy stories, poetry, factual books and picture books with the children. As each child grows in confidence with blending for reading and the recognition of high frequency words they are introduced to 1-1 reading and guided reading. Objectives are set for children individually or in groups to develop early reading. These books are also sent home for parents to support their child.

We help the children to understand the concepts of print and develop pre-reading skills by touching each word as it is read, enabling the children to match the spoken to the written word and to follow print in the correct direction. We discuss the content of the books to ensure understanding. Stories are available on C.D for the children to listen to. All these activities help the children to discover the relationship between the spoken and the written word. They discover words and pictures have meaning and discover rhymes, rhythms and patterns of words.

There are many games and puzzles provided which enable the children to develop visual discrimination and matching skills necessary for learning to read. We provide a fully literate environment in our Early Years and the children are exposed to many signs, labels and captions around the room.

Through daily Phonics teaching, the children begin with Phase 1 of the Letters and Sounds programme and Foundations for Phonics. During this introductory phase, children will become attuned to the different sounds around them. Little Wandle (Letters and Sounds revised) is then used to teach children to recognise letters (graphemes) and their associated sounds (phonemes). Daily phonics sessions are supported with weekly reading sessions that focus on decoding, prosody and comprehension.

Comprehension

We encourage children to demonstrate an understanding of what they have read. We help them to retell stories using their own words and to anticipate key events in stories.

We encourage them to use new vocabulary during story discussions, rhymes and role-play.

MATHEMATICS

(Number & Numerical Patterns)

Mathematics enters every area of the Early Years and the development of mathematical concepts is happening all the time. Through their play and by means of adult-supported practical experiences children become familiar with sorting, matching, ordering, sequencing, recognising and creating and exploring numerical patterns and counting everyday objects.

Elements of the daily routine such as preparing snacks, counting those present, number games, songs, rhymes and number-related activities such as jigsaw puzzles help children recognise and have a deep understanding of numbers to 10 (and beyond, where appropriate).

Children use their developing mathematical understanding to solve practical problems and their developing mathematical vocabulary to describe shape, position, size and quantity, simple addition and subtraction, doubling, halving and sharing. Early mathematical concepts are developed such as sorting, matching, colour, shape, size and number. Children learn about routes and directions.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

(Past & Present, People, Culture & Communities & The Natural World)

A safe and stimulating environment allows children to explore and experiment with a wide range of natural and manufactured materials. They learn to observe, talk and ask questions

about and sometimes record features of objects and substances and to recognise differences, patterns, similarities and change.

Children are assisted both indoors and outdoors in exploring and understanding their environment, their families, cultures and past and present events in their own lives. They explore, care for and recognise features of living things and the natural world, e.g. in the garden and with visiting animals. The children explore a range of found materials. They are involved in planning and decision making, cutting, placing, fixing and fastening. Language skills are developed as children talk about what they have made. At times they are asked to make something to meet given criteria. They have the opportunity to explore a full range of materials and to select the most appropriate materials and make their desired model. They are encouraged to test their work and amend and improve as appropriate.

Children will have opportunities to use computers/l-pads and the classroom has an interactive whiteboard. There are a range of programmes to enable the children to develop hand/eye co-ordination leading to fundamental skills. Our programmes allow the children to draw and paint pictures and engage in early reading and numeracy activities. Children also learn about online safety.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

(Gross Motor & Fine Motor Skills)

A range of large and small equipment and opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, allow children to develop confidence and enjoyment in the use and development of their own physical skills. Adult support enables children safely to meet physical challenges, developing increasing skill, co-ordination and control in moving, climbing and balancing. At the same time, children are supported in the development of the fine motor skills required to use tools such as brushes, pencils and scissors, to handle small objects with increasing control and precision and to choose the correct tool for the job. Children explore a variety of manipulative toys, which develop manual dexterity by slotting, pushing, pressing and threading. Children also learn about eating with knives and forks and dressing independently.

Children take part in weekly PE sessions where they learn fundamental skills, ball skills, gymnastics, athletics and dance.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

(Creating with Materials & Being Imaginative & Expressive)

Children are encouraged to use their senses and a wide range of resources in order to express their own ideas and feelings and to construct their individual responses in two and three dimensions.

Art equipment, including paints, glue, crayons, and pencils as well as natural and discarded resources provide for open-ended exploration of colour, shape and texture and the development of skills in painting, drawing and collage.

Children join in with and respond to music, dance and stories and there are many opportunities for imaginative role-play, both individually and as part of the group.

All children will have time to experiment with musical instruments and partake in singing sessions.

PLANNING

All staff are committed to planning as a team around the needs and interests of the children.

LONG TERM PLANS

Long term planning provides a strong framework for working with 3-5 year olds.

We base our plans on the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is the over-arching framework that informs all others stages of planning. It shows the range of experiences/learning

opportunities that are available whilst the children are in the foundation stage. Planning needs to be flexible and change to incorporate children's interests and meet individual needs.

MEDIUM TERM PLANS

Planning takes place carefully half-termly or termly and is evaluated weekly. The topics are planned carefully to ensure continuity and progression throughout the Foundation Stage and to engage the children. In addition to this, staff plan an overview so ideas for activities can be planned for. It is important to notice that these plans do change in accordance to the needs and interests of the children, therefore plans are annotated to reflect this.

SHORT TERM PLANS

Planning meetings are held weekly between staff. At these meetings activities/learning objectives are selected from our medium plans as deemed appropriate to meet the needs and interests of the children. The activities are then set out on our weekly planning sheets. The plans are extended/differentiated accordingly at this stage. Children are also involved in short term planning and asked for their ideas.

7 RESOURCES

The children will have the opportunity to select from the following areas indoor and/or outdoor:

- Quiet /book
- Sand/water
- Construction play
- Mud kitchen
- Creative play
- Writing/mark making
- Phonics
- Malleable play
- Table toys/small world
- Computer/Interactive White Board
- Maths
- Science/investigation
- Role play
- Music & instruments
- Physical – Finger gym, fine motor, bikes and scooters
- In addition, there are regular sessions in the school hall for P.E.
- Forest activities

8 OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment of particular areas of the curriculum is a part of the on-going planning, assess, and review cycle. Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork.

Methods of Observation

1 Daily observational jottings on post it notes/sticky labels noting children's significant achievements, interests and characteristic of learning. These should be key observations in order to aid assessment.

2 Planned focused observations and analysis.

3 Photographic evidence

4 Parental involvement – home observations

Time is planned for sharing and evaluating observations and incorporating plans for individual children into weekly planning.

Regular discussion ensures accurate assessments are made.

Regular summative assessment of individual children leading to the setting of learning priorities for the following half term.

Baseline assessments including the RBA and early years' profile are carried out to provide accurate judgements about the child's development and to make the transition to Year 1 smoother.

Records

Each class in the Early Years has a folder which contains a collection of documents collected by Early Years practitioners that provide a picture of what and how the children have been learning and developing under the areas identified in the EYFS. This can consist of photos, work, mark-making, post-it notes, sticky labels, observations. This should only be key adult led and independent work. Staff will also liaise regularly to discuss the children and share knowledge. The aim is to build a unique picture of what each child knows, feels and can do as well as their particular interests and learning style. This picture can then be used to pinpoint learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences. Parents are encouraged to add to these records as a joint partnership.

Key evidence and celebrations will also be recorded and shared with parents using our online journal called Tapestry.

At the end of Reception each child will be discussed and evidence or observations shared with the Year 1 teachers. If a child has not achieved the Early Years Goal then the Year 1 teacher will continue to work on these until they are achieved, following a rigorous transition process.

9 BEHAVIOUR

Our aim is that all children will flourish in a secure environment in which expectations are clear and children are free to develop without fear of being hurt or hindered by anyone.

Children will be supported and encouraged by adults to verbalise their feelings and to adopt a problem-solving approach to dealing with social conflict in order to develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

To achieve this:

- _ Adults will support the children to follow the school's behaviour policy.
- _ Children will understand how and why they should make the right choices, children will understand our traffic light or rainbow system.
- _ Adults will provide a consistent, positive role model and will endorse desirable behaviour.
- _ In any case of misbehaviour it will be made clear that it is the behaviour which is unwelcome, not the child.
- _ Any behavioural problems will be handled in a developmentally appropriate fashion, respecting individual children's level of understanding and maturity and acknowledging that some kinds of behaviour may arise from a child's special needs.
- _ Adults will support children in working towards acceptable behaviour.
- _ Recurring problems will be tackled by all staff in partnership with the parents to establish an understanding of the cause.

10 PARENT AND COMMUNITY LNKS

Our aim is for parents to be partners in their children's learning and to be fully informed of their children's progress. We encourage parents to see us at the beginning/end of a session with any queries or immediate needs.

All parents/carers will be actively encouraged to attend:

- _ Parent evenings
- _ Parent groups
- _ Parent workshops
- _ School social events, for example Celebration assembly
- _ Participation in special events, for example the Easter Bonnet Parade, Christmas Play

In addition we send; open ended homework tasks, a reading book and library book, record and observation sheets for parents to record significant steps and achievements.

11 STAFF AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Early Years staff will attend appropriate courses/information evenings/hub meetings to extend knowledge, skills and expertise and in order to keep up to date and abreast of educational

developments. The information is then shared with members of the team and, where appropriate, fed back to the whole school staff.

12 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SPECIAL NEEDS

The school's purpose is to deliver a well-planned, balanced and appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the community we serve. We have high expectations of all our children and provide them with quality learning experiences covering all aspects of the curriculum. These are irrespective of race, gender, class or disability. The school's ethos supports the development of cultural and personal identities and prepares our children for full participation in society.

Every child needs to achieve success in order to develop a positive self-image. We recognise that all our children, including those with special educational needs, require a differentiated approach in order for them to have access to the whole curriculum and therefore reach their potential.

It is the responsibility of the SENCO and ALL members of staff to ensure that teaching strategies, resources and support are appropriate to the needs of each individual. Our school endeavours to provide special needs support earlier rather than later. This means staff are aware of the importance of any special needs as the result of early assessment.

'Your chance to Shine.'

13 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Early Years Coordinator J Gorton will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the appropriate curriculum and the evaluation of its success. This information will be shared with Early Years staff at regular meetings and will be used to support future planning and development initiatives.

The Early Years staff are responsible for the day to day running of their classes.

The Head Teacher A. Gilbert along with the 'School Improvement Team' has overall responsibility for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

14 The EYFS GENERAL WELFARE REQUIREMENTS

At our school we take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This includes that no staff are to use personal phones, smart watches or cameras at all while children are present in the classroom. All electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities will be kept locked away. (Please refer to full school policy.) All of our team have appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge. We promote the good health of the children including talking about personal hygiene, healthy eating, activity and oral health. We take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill. We follow policy and procedure in regards to Covid-19 when necessary. We follow school documentation with regard to injury at school and each week a named person is in-charge of restocking and checking first aid supplies.

All level 2 and level 3 staff members who gained their qualification since June 2016, will hold a valid paediatric first aid certificate, otherwise they cannot be included in ratios.

Outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys are safe and suitable for their purpose. Each day all members of staff are responsible for checking the garden, gazebos and ensuring all gates are locked. At the beginning of any outdoor session staff will ensure the gates are locked to ensure the safety of all children.

Each member of EYFS staff at Hall Green Primary School plan and organise an appropriate curriculum so that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development

experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs. We keep data, records and policies as previously outlined for the safe and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Reviewed July 2024

Next review July 2025