



## **The Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**July 2014**

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

**- “Early Years Foundation Stage”  
Department for Children, Schools and Families  
2012**

## **Introduction**

A strong parent partnership will provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. As children commence their journey at Headlands Primary school, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment.

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage**

The overall aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the outcomes as described by 'Every Child Matters.' These outcomes, staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and working towards achieving economic wellbeing are at the centre of the EYFS.

The EYFS principles which guide the effective work of all practitioners are grouped into four distinct but complementary themes:

- **A unique child.** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement as well as celebration and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
- **Positive relationships.** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.
- **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
- **Learning and development.** The Foundation Unit is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest and areas where children can be active and take risks. The unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently both inside and out.

At Headlands C of E Primary School we believe strongly in the values that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for a child's future learning and development and is a preparation for life's journey.

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- **communication and language;**
- **physical development;**
- **personal, social and emotional development.**

The relationship between the three prime areas of learning and development were set out by Clare Tickell in her review of the EYFS framework in 2011.

## **Personal, Social and Emotional Development supports:**

-**Physical Development** – a child who feels secure and safe is confident to expand the boundaries of exploration and is motivated to reach, move and test physical capacities.

**-Communication and Language** within relationships that establish turn-taking, joint activity, a desire to communicate and understanding of shared meanings of words.

**Physical Development supports:**

**-Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – increasing physical control provides experience of the self as an active agent in the environment, promoting growth in confidence and awareness of control.

**-Communication and Language** – a child who can effectively use the large movements, gestures and fine movements involved in speech is able to convey messages to others.

**Communication and Language supports:**

**-Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – a child who can communicate feelings, needs and ideas develops a strong sense of self and is increasingly able to relate to others in rewarding and appropriate ways.

**-Physical Development** through describing actions (which increases conscious control) and through talk about health and the factors which influence it.

We 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 prime areas are collectively crucial areas of development and are required to be in place by the time the child reaches the age of 5, these areas are universal and independent of specific areas. Children cannot master the skills within the specific areas without developing the prime areas. The **characteristics of effective learning** in the prime and specific areas of learning and development are interconnected. The way in which the child engages with other people and their environment- playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

**Provision**

- We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring Early Years teachers and classroom assistants who plan and work closely together to provide a high quality curriculum.
- We adopt a key worker system in Nursery whereby a strong and close relationship can be built with individual children and parents allowing for better understanding of learning needs and future experiences.
- We value our parent partnership and work hard to keep lines of communication open with an open door policy. We have developed ways to communicate with parents and carers so that all parties can have responsibility for contributing to their child's individual learning needs.
- We ensure that the needs of each child are met both academically and emotionally, helping to develop each child's confidence and independence.
- We endeavour to provide an individual education planned around the needs and experiences of each child, so that true potential can be nurtured and realized.
- We value all environments as a potential for learning and strive to provide an enriching, stimulating, warm, safe and friendly environment indoors and outdoors.
- Specific learning times and routines are established so that children begin to anticipate and feel confident in their own learning.

- Classrooms (indoors and outdoors) have been specifically considered so that their layout and functionality is providing the best provision for that specific learning space.
- Children are encouraged to 'have a go' at any activity without the worry of making mistakes and to feel confident in their own abilities.
- Provision is specifically planned and purposeful with a specific learning intention to a) address a specific learning outcome and b) meet the needs of individual education plans.
- Continuous provision provides the opportunities for children to be makers of their own learning destination.
- A wide and varied curriculum allows children to experience rich, stimulating and real life encounters that they can carry into their own learning development.

**Through the use of excellent provision we aim to:**

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring environment that is sensitive to the needs of all children including those with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Value and respect every child's achievements, assessing their individual needs with the aim to help them progress to reach their highest potential.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in parent partnership ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability develop and achieve.
- Provide inclusive opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development,

**Observation, Planning and Assessment Cycle**

Planning rich and stimulating experiences is our aim, with the individual child at the centre of our plans. This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and ongoing formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practice.

Staff achieves this through:

- Making a thorough 'baseline' assessment and judgment of every child on entering Nursery and Reception, that allows for purposeful, individual planning to take place
- Observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child initiated activities and planned activities, and learning from and sharing with parents about what the child does at home.
- Considering the examples of development as stated in the unique theme: observing what children can do, and identifying the stage on their developmental pathway,
- Following their learning pathways through follow up Individual Activity Plans that support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development.
- Considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care. This information is then effectively used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

The EYFS requires Headlands Foundation Stage to undertake summative assessments in which staff reviews children's progress. This is shared and discussed with parent and carers in order to create a true, holistic reflection of the individual child.

- After every term parents and carers will review and comment upon their children's individual learning and development in order to collectively, with their responsible adult in the unit make suggestions for future learning and development, next steps and experiences.
- In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five, Headlands completes the EYFS profile for each child. The profile provides teachers with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels.
- The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels, exceeding them or below expected levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, taking into account assessment, observations and the teacher's own knowledge and relationship with the child.
- In the final term, at the end of the EYFS, the teachers will report on the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals. Progress will be described as emerging, expecting or exceeding.
- Information is also shared and collated at parent's evening during the school year.
- Current level and stage of development, as well learning style preferences as informed by the 'Characteristics for Effective Learning' are shared with the Key Stage One (Year 1) staff to prepare them for individual children's readiness, needs and next steps

In compliance with Early Years regulations parents may have access to developmental records about their child.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Here at Headlands the Early Years Foundation Stage is taught in accordance with the present policy for Equal Opportunities. Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique in their own right and act upon it.

- Buildings are modified to make them fully accessible to all.
- Support from the 'Specialist Provision Unit' where a wealth of information and guidance can be offered for children with specific learning needs.
- Our curriculum respects a child's ethnic faith and cultural heritage, and the special needs of each child, by ensuring that they are positively represented in all areas of learning within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images.
- Specialist teachers, support and SENCO are constantly on hand to offer support, advice and information.
- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that we identify and help those children in our care with additional educational needs including gifted children.

### **Transition**

Headlands are sensitive to change when supporting its children in its transitions arrangements. This is achieved through the following ways:

- Each child has the opportunity to visit the school prior to starting.
- Nursery staff will home visit children newly starting into Nursery.
- In line with Kirklees we have an official transition day so that children starting in reception have the opportunity to visit their new classroom.

- We have a shared outdoor space so children in the foundation stage unit will get to know one another and all the staff in the unit from the moment they begin their time in Nursery, allowing them to build vital relationships with one another.
- We endeavour to prepare every child academically, socially and emotionally to learning styles, independence and routines of Year One.
- We participate in whole school events, making certain that the Foundation Stage Unit is encompassed into the whole school, allowing the children have a feeling of belonging.

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