

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Inspiring Children to **shine**



**'walk as children of light'** Ephesians 5:8

Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy EYFS Mission Statement:

*Children leave Hardwicke early years as creative individuals, who have learnt a mind-set of skills that will enable them to embrace the challenges of every day school life as they continue on their next exciting journey.*

<i>Curriculum Leader</i>	<i>Policy Dated</i>	<i>Ratified by Governors</i>	<i>Next Review</i>
<i>Denise Arinze</i>	<i>April 2022</i>		<i>April 2024</i>

This policy has taken into account the expectations of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust and works alongside the academy's Behaviour, SEND, Child Protection & Safeguarding, Health & Safety and Intimate Care Policies.

## Introduction

*"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five 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 together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."*

*"Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage" (Department for Education, 2021)*

At Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy, we are committed to providing a high quality early years' education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. This is fostered within a Christian ethos where quality teaching promotes high standards of behaviour and achievement and inspires pride in our society.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. Our EYFS accommodates children aged 4-5 years. In our academy we have two reception classes housing sixty places in total. Each reception class has a full time teacher and a full time early years teaching assistant. To ensure best practice and continuity our foundation stage classes work closely together and share planning, activities and an outdoor learning environment.

## Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right and we recognise it as a crucial stage in education, preparing children with the basic skills for learning in Key Stage 1 and beyond. The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **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 with parents/carers 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 reception classroom 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.

The classroom is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

### Aims

At Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy, we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. Across EYFS, we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

#### ***It is our aim to:***

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- 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 and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and next steps and helping each child to progress. We will use a variety of assessment methods including ongoing and more formalised observations and the use of the Target Tracker observation tool.
- Develop positive relationships with parents/carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual children including those who additional needs.

### Learning and Development

The early-years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents/carers and the benefits of sharing both successes and concerns with them.

#### ***The EYFS Curriculum***

Our core reference document is the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021*. Alongside this we use the non-statutory guidance of the *Developmental Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2021* which supports practitioners in implementing the statutory requirements of the EYFS curriculum.

The Statutory Framework offers seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in all early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are

important and inter-connected and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across these areas of learning. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their reception year. 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.

***The three prime areas are:***

- ***Personal, Social and Emotional Development***
- ***Communication and Language***
- ***Physical Development***

Children must have developed these areas sufficiently for the teacher to then begin to introduce the specific areas.

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

***The four specific areas are:***

- ***Literacy*** - Supported through the focused teaching of phonics using the Essential Letters and Sounds document alongside our Oxford Owl reading scheme.
- ***Mathematics*** - Supported through the Explore Maths approach (aspects of Can Do Maths) and the White Rose document.
- ***Understanding the World***
- ***Expressive Arts and Design.***

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

The EYFS curriculum provided the basis for continuity of experience by clearly established links with the programmes of study for KS1. Within the areas of learning the early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of EYFS. Some children in our academy will exceed these goals and others will work towards them as they enter Year 1.

### **Characteristics of Learning**

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Playing and Exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

With these priorities in mind, EYFS practitioners plan topics that engage their pupils. These topics may last a whole term, half term or even just a few weeks or days. Staff may change the learning that is taking place, if, for example, a local or world event occurs that sparks an interest with the pupils. Intentionally, topics are not over-planned so that there is time to explore the interests of the children or even the staff themselves. We make best use of the outdoors and the local and wider environment. There are off-site visits and visitors coming into our academy, which extend and enrich teaching and learning opportunities for all.

***"Play is the highest form of research" (Albert Einstein)***

### Assessment

Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy uses the Target Tracker system to record summative and observational assessments. Assessment data is recorded by the teachers and teaching assistants in online learning journals with examples celebrated in pupil journals. Monitoring of each child will take place through daily and planned observations, discussions, photographs, record keeping and planned assessment.

Reception children are observed during their first weeks, to provide baseline information which we record against our own baseline criteria, this is then recorded onto Target Tracker. This information is closely monitored to ensure that all children are making good progress.

In the first instance our baseline assessment takes into account any other records we receive from pre-school settings, parents and childminders.

In the summer term, practitioners consider the seventeen Early Learning Goals (ELG's) in the EYFS Profile to decide whether each child is working at the expected levels, exceeding the levels or have not yet met the levels. Judgements against the ELGs are based on ongoing observation; all relevant records; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution. We record each child's level of development against areas of learning as **Emerging**, **Expected** or **Exceeding**.

Observations and assessment of each individual pupil is on-going with the information gained being used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Specific time for planned

observations and formative assessments is allocated each week, which may take place in the form of a general classroom observation, an observation on a particular child or a focus target from the EYFS Profile. These types of assessment help us to inform planning. All of these observations are recorded either on the Target Tracker observation/assessment tool or through annotated photographs, 'post its' or annotations on children's work. Our assessments and observations allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

Pupil progress meetings are held with the senior leadership team. These meetings are informative and will assist teachers in supporting and implementing the correct planning and provision to ensure their pupils progress.

At the end of the final term of a reception pupil's year the EYFS profile results are reported to the Diocese of Gloucestershire Academies Trust, who monitor and moderate the judgements made across all academies within the trust.

We share this information with parents via the annual pupil report. The end of year report highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs, and gives details of the child's general progress.

### Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS practitioners to follow the principles stated in this policy.

There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This Governor will discuss EYFS practice with the EYFS lead regularly and provide feedback for the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The head teacher and senior leadership team will carry out monitoring of our reception classes as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Sometimes a child will require additional support to access the EYFS curriculum. For further information, please read our SEND policy. Support will be provided through access to our SENDCO, class teachers, teaching assistants. Through liaison with external agencies additional support is given to children in a variety of different ways:

- Through a differentiated/or personalised curriculum.

- Support from qualified adults who work 1:1 or with a small group of pupils on a focused aspect of learning (classroom based or outside of the classroom).
- Adaptations/additional resources to support children in accessing the curriculum.
- Children with specific learning needs, visual timetables, social stories, pre-teaching, sensory awareness and breaks may be used to ensure access to the curriculum.
- Children with specific needs will be supported by a My Plan, My Plan+ or EHCP which will be regularly monitored in partnership with parents/carers, teachers, SENDCO and outside agencies where appropriate.

### Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school. All children at Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school. In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### Transition

#### ***Pre-school settings***

We have strong links with Hardwicke Playgroup as well as other local settings and local childminders. Pre-school children along with their parents/carers are invited in to visit our academy around Christmas time so they can watch our Christmas performance. All feeder settings are invited in during the summer term for story and play sessions with their new peers and class teacher.

Early in the summer term the EYFS Lead and reception teacher visits the different pre-school settings. This visit gives the EYFS teachers time to meet the children and gather information from their key workers. This is particularly helpful for the SEND children as we can then offer further 'drop in' visits to help them settle as well as work with parents to relieve any anxieties they may have. During these visits we donate school uniform so that the pre-school children can use them in their role play area and become familiar with the academy colours.

In the summer term all children are invited into school for a story session and a stay and play session. We offer extra sessions for children with specific needs to help support the transition.

## **Reception to Year 1**

Reception and Year 1 work together to make the transition from the EYFS to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

At Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy:

- Children are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the reception year.
- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- Reception children meet their Year 1 teacher during the summer term for story/golden time sessions.
- EYFS profiles are passed on and discussed with Year 1 teachers.
- Reception and Year 1 teachers meet in July to discuss the individual needs of the children.
- The same phonics and spelling approach is continued throughout Year 1 and Year 2 using the Essential Letters and Sounds document.

## **Links with parents**

We believe that parents/carers are a child's first educator and as such we encourage parents/carers to work closely with us and involve them actively in their child's learning. We want parents/carers to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting.

At Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy, we believe a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We develop this by:

- Outlining the reception curriculum to parents/carers during the new parents' meeting in June, to enable them to understand the value of supporting their child's learning at home. Offering early autumn phonic, reading, maths meetings to support what is taught in the classroom.
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby parents can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner.
- Both EYFS teachers meet and greet parents/carers on arrival so any immediate worries or concerns can be aired.
- Parents /carers offered regular play and stay sessions before school for the first half term (any further arranged on request).
- Sharing progress at school and encouraging parents to contribute to their child's learning e.g. send 'WOW' vouchers in to be celebrated, share other milestones and achievements with school.



- Inviting parents/carers to help in the reception class or other classes in the school. Opportunities for parents/carers to support us with off-site visits.
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read every night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school diary.
- Providing an annual written report to parents in July summarising the child's progress against the Early Learning Goals and give an outline of their child's Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- Holding two parents' evenings throughout the academic year and a summer 'drop in' session if needed to follow up their child's reports home.

### Health and Safety and Safeguarding

**'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.'**  
**(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021).**

At Hardwicke Parochial Primary Academy, we understand we are legally required to apply to the welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

We work towards this by:

- Providing a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence.
- Promoting good health.
- Managing behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs (see behaviour policy).
- Ensuring that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Ensuring that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for.
- Maintaining records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

It is important to us that all children in school are 'safe' and more information can be found in the schools Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and our Health and Safety Policy.