



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines the provision that Hale Nursery and Primary Academy offers to all its pupils aged two to five years. Children within this age range are taught in The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). We value the importance of the EYFS in providing a secure foundation for future learning and development.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYF) that applies from September 2021.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body will approve the Early Years policy and hold the Academy Head to account for its implementation.
- The Academy Head is responsible for ensuring the day-to-day implementation of this policy in conjunction with the Early Years Lead.
- All Early Years staff are responsible for the daily implementation of this policy under the guidance of the Early Years Lead.

Intent

Every child is central to all that we do, their happiness and wellbeing is at the heart of our curriculum, and we want them to be *inspired to learn*.

We place the children at the heart of our engaging, inclusive thematic curriculum and we believe that every child will achieve their full potential. We enable our children to become happy, resilient, well-rounded individuals by instilling a strong set of values that develop high levels of both social and emotional intelligence. We actively promote an environment where every child is valued, is shown respect and inspired to become the very best they can be. We aim to take every child in our care on a most wonderful educational journey which will nurture their talents and provide the skills and experiences to last a lifetime

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Hale Academy are treated fairly regardless of race, 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.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our Academy, Nursery children attend 15 or 30 hours a week (2.5 day split or Monday-Friday). The children are organised into three groups.

Caterpillars: 2.5 day beginning of the week

Ladybird: 2.5-day end of the week

Bumblebees: 30 hours Monday-Friday

Statutory guidance outlines four underlining principles:

Quality and Consistency: At Hale we pride ourselves on having an inclusive environment that ensures children are both supported and challenged in their learning. We work hard to ensure all children make good progress.

A Secure Foundation: Our curriculum is planned according to children's individual curiosities, through core stories and themes. We are highly reflective and use observations and interactions to inform future planning.

Partnership Working: At Hale Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent and to form secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families. We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

Equality of Opportunity: We aim to provide a safe, caring, and friendly environment for all our children to allow them to learn effectively and help them to reach their full potential.

There are seven areas of learning. Three of these are seen as the prime focus for healthy development of pre-school aged children. They are seen as the foundations of learning.

Communication and Language

- Listening, Attention and Understanding
- Speaking

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. At Hale we understand the importance of back-and-forth interactions in a child's language and cognitive development. Our learning environment is language rich, and the team is committed to engaging in high quality interactions. Children are given opportunities to experience a language rich environment to develop and extend their vocabulary, to develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to become active listeners.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Children's wellbeing and happiness is at the heart of all that we do. At Hale we know that the development of PSED is crucial for children to lead happy and healthy lives, and fundamental to their cognitive development. The team are committed in developing positive, warm, and strong relationships with all children.

Physical Development

- Fine Motor
- Gross Motor

Physical and sensory experiences are vital in developing children's co-ordination, strength, spatial awareness, agility, balance, stability, and all-round development. At Hale, the children have access to the indoor and outdoor environment and a range of resources to support both gross and fine motor development.

Alongside these three prime areas, there are four specific areas for learning.

Literacy

- Comprehension
- Word Reading
- Writing

Children are given access to a wide range of high-quality texts to foster a love of reading. Our curriculum themes are planned through children's interests and core books. We use a systematic approach to phonics to develop children's oracy skills, to link sounds and letters and use them to begin to read and write independently. We begin with Letters and Sounds Phase 1 in nursery and then progress onto the Essential Letters and Sounds programme in Reception. They are given a wide range of writing opportunities linked to texts that they are familiar with or experiences that they have had.

Mathematics

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

At Hale we ensure children learn mathematical concepts through practical 'hands on' experiences to develop their knowledge and understanding of numbers, counting, calculation, shape, space, and measures. Talk is at the heart of early problem-solving skills, which is essential in children gaining a deep, secure, and adaptable understanding of mathematical concepts.

Understanding the world

- Past and Present
- People, Culture and Communities
- Natural World

Children are given opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and their environment. It is vital to help guide children to make sense of their physical world and their community. It starts with children exploring their own past and present experiences. To help foster curiosity and encourage children to explore similarities and differences in their community, environment and promote exploratory play. To develop a sense of belonging, understand diversity, build self-esteem, respect and responsibility.

Expressive Arts and Design

- Creating with Materials
- Being Imaginative and Expressive

Children are encouraged to explore and use a range of media and materials. They are encouraged to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions through art, movement, dance, role-play and design.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Children are encouraged to be independent, and we have many areas and activities where children can self-select materials and equipment. Through such child-initiated play the children can develop 'Characteristics of Effective learning' which include:

Playing and Exploring: Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning: Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

Creative and Critical Thinking: Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Child Led Learning

Children have extended periods of time to engage in their own lines of enquiry. Our learning environment is set up to ensure children have access to open ended resources to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. The inside and outside environments have equal importance. During this time children will:

- Engage in open ended resources that support learning in all areas of the curriculum.
- Practice the skills and knowledge acquired in adult directed activities.
- Practice and embed learning behaviours.

Baseline

During the first half term (Autumn 1) or the child's first 6 weeks in our provision we will undertake a baseline assessment. This is where staff observe children during child led learning and undertaking activities for all areas of the curriculum. In the Nursery we focus on the Prime Areas only and in Reception we cover both Prime and Specific. According to statutory guidance, children in Reception will complete the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA will be an activity-based assessment of pupils' starting points in:

- language, communication and literacy
- mathematics

The RBA will be a short task-based assessment. Pupils will use practical resources to complete these tasks and teachers will record the results on a laptop, computer, or tablet. It will not be used to label or track individual pupils. Schools will be required to carry out the assessment within the first 6 weeks of pupils starting reception. No numerical score will be shared, and the data will only be used at the end of year 6 to form the school-level progress measure. However, teachers will receive a series of short, narrative statements that tell

them how their pupils performed in the assessment. These can be used to inform teaching within the first term.

Two-Year-Old Progress Check

In accordance with statutory guidance, when a child is aged between 2 and 3, staff review their progress and provide parents and/or carers with a written summary of the child's development in the 3 prime areas. This 'progress check' highlights the areas in which a child is progressing well and the areas in which additional support is needed. At the end of their time in Nursery, they will receive a written report against the Prime Areas of learning, characteristics, and next steps. This ensures that necessary information is passed onto the next setting to build on the child's knowledge and understanding.

At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. We meet the family to discuss their child's progress, next steps and support when transitioning to year 1. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child. The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff and leader to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Academy Head and EYFS leader will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

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