

EARLY YEARS POLICY

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1. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT

Hanover School is committed to the view that all members of the school community are of equal value whatever their race, gender, class, disability, learning need, sexual orientation, age or religion. Everyone is entitled to equal opportunities in education and to the enhanced life changes that this will bring.

We ensure all children feel included and supported by working in an anti-discriminatory way. We regularly monitor provision to ensure every child's learning is well supported and builds on children's home, culture and linguistic background. We use materials, equipment and displays which reflect the home languages and cultural and ethnic diversity of the children, the local community and wider world.

We work towards supporting bilingual children's development in their home language as well as English. We ensure that bilingual children have access to the full curriculum and are involved in all the learning experiences offered, giving the extra support needed so that they can participate and understand. Children will be learning English through real-life, everyday, meaningful experiences and through interacting with other children and staff.

2. EARLY YEARS AIMS STATEMENT

- To support children in becoming competent and confident learners during and beyond the Foundation Stage.
- To provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in which creativity and expressiveness are valued.
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum for every child.

This Early Years Policy is for staff, parents/carers, students and visitors. It is intended to provide a clear framework for a shared understanding of early years philosophy and practice and to ensure continuity across the Foundation Stage.

The Foundation Stage is a distinct phase in education, which begins when children enter Nursery and continues until the end of Reception Year. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is important in its own right as well as underpinning all future learning by supporting and fostering children's personal, social and emotional well being and positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning.

3. TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

a. HOW CHILDREN LEARN

The following characteristics are vital to Children's early learning:

- First hand experience
- Interacting with others
- Being physically active
- Having their interests taken seriously
- Play

Foundation Stage Children Require:

- Adults who support, encourage and interact with them in meaningful ways individually, in small groups and in large group situations.
- An interesting, stimulating and safe environment indoors and outdoors to investigate, and time to explore this environment.
- Extended opportunities for well supported play as this is an important way that they make sense of their world.

b. WHAT CHILDREN WILL LEARN

An effective curriculum for young children takes account of how they learn and the abilities, knowledge and understanding which they bring with them to school. The early years curriculum emphasises personal, social and emotional development.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is divided into the following areas of learning:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication, language and literacy
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Physical development
- Creative development

These areas of learning are used when planning the curriculum in Nursery and Reception and when monitoring children's progress. Children's learning is not subject based and most learning experiences will be presented in a cross-curricular way.

The early year goals specify the attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding most children should acquire by the time they leave Reception class. The 'Development Matters' in the EYFS show progress towards the early learning goals for every area of learning.

c. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Teaching strategies for the Foundation Stage need to take account of children's self-initiated learning, providing a balance of child initiated and adult led activities.

Teaching strategies to ensure high quality child initiated learning:

- Providing a stimulating learning environment inside and outside, with provision arranged into areas for different types of play
- Staff involvement in children's chosen activities and play.

Teaching strategies for adult lead activities:

- Planned "focussed activities" for specific children, any child who wishes to join in, or for every child to do. If it is for every child the activity must be suitably differentiated to meet the learning needs of each child.
- Some whole class teaching for short periods, such as shared story, direct teaching, singing, discussions and sharing work and achievements.

Observation is an important teaching strategy used in the early years, showing children's interests as well as current skills, knowledge and understanding. This information has implications for the approach taken to teaching as well as the actual activities and experiences planned.

Resources and equipment are accessible to the children in order to teach them to be autonomous and independent (see section 4 Classroom organisation).

4. BROAD GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE

PLANNING, ASSESSMENTS AND RECORD-KEEPING

PLANNING

Nursery and reception plan together to ensure continuity for children's learning across the Foundation Stage and provide continuity with key stage 1. There are three stages in planning: long, medium and short term plans.

- Long term plans are devised as a team across Nursery and Reception. The EYFS provides the framework for planning across all areas of learning during children's time in the Foundation Stage.
- Medium term plans cover the attitudes, skills, concepts and knowledge to be taught over a term in all six areas of learning.
- Short term plans show the specific learning objectives to be taught daily over a weekly period, involving a balance of adult led and child led learning experience in both the Nursery and Reception. Plans include details of the activities through which the learning objectives are taught and how they will be adapted to the needs of individuals. Weekly and daily activities are planned separately for each group and will reflect the age and maturity of children in each class.
- Daily and weekly plans should draw on observations and evaluations of self-initiated activities and adult-led tasks.
- Planning should support and stimulate development in English to meet the specific needs of children learning English as an additional language in the early years.

Observations and assessments of children's progress inform short term planning in both Nursery and Reception.

CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

Teaching approaches appropriate to children in their early years are shared across Nursery and Reception to ensure continuity - i.e. in child initiated learning and play activities provided, and also in the adult led teaching. Regular discussions with parents/carers contribute to an informed picture of a child's progress. Regular discussions between Reception and key stage 1 staff about children's learning and development ensure continuity between the phases.

Assessment on entry to Reception is an important aspect of the assessment procedures which ensure continuity and progression. Summative Nursery assessments should feed into the judgements made about children in assessments for the Foundation Stage Profiles at the end of the Foundation Stage.

Continuity for children between home and school both Nursery and Reception children is maintained through home school links.

CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

Play is a key way in which young children learn and consolidate their learning. Play and independent self-initiated learning is supported by well resourced provision such as:

- Sand and water
- Home corner
- Role play area
- Writing area
- Attractive book area
- Creative area
- Areas for mathematical and scientific exploration
- Small world play
- Construction

The classrooms are organised to give the children space to move about safely and with ease.

Resources are sorted so that children can access them and put them away. They are well organised and labelled with words and pictures. Displays promote, support and reflect children's current interests and should be changed frequently to maintain interest.

OUTDOOR PROVISIONS

Outdoor provisions is available for learning and teaching in all areas of the curriculum. It enables children to learn by working on a larger more active and exuberant scale than is possible indoors. Children should have

free access to outdoor space throughout the day. Each of the Nursery and Reception classes has access to some outdoor space of its own and all are able to use playground - with climbing frames - throughout the day.

ASSESSMENTS

Nursery and Reception staff record children's significant development in skills, their growing understanding of ideas and concepts and attitudes to themselves and to learning.

I. Involving parent/carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute to their child's record when they start Nursery and Reception classes. They are invited to discuss and record their child's interests, play, talk and general development at home.

II. Observations

Nursery and Reception staff assess all children's learning and development by making observations across the breadth of learning opportunities provided: in play, self-chosen activities as well as adult-oriented activities. Observations are written in a positive way, focussing on what a child can do and further experiences needed.

Observations are generally short notes focussing on the child's significant achievements as they happen. Staff focus on groups of individuals on a weekly basis.

Longer observations are made of individual children when staff/parents/carers are concerned about an aspect of the child's development. Each half-term staff review all children's ongoing records to select areas for further observation, assessment and future planning.

Written reports at the end of Nursery and Reception provide the Reception and Year 1 teacher with important information on each child. Information presented in the Nursery report will also provide information for baseline assessment at the beginning of Reception.

5. ADMISSION AND TRANSFER PROCEDURES

Settling procedures include opportunities for parents/carers and children to visit their new class teacher before starting school.

ADMISSION

Admissions to Reception and Nursery should be staggered as much as possible. Parents/carers should be able to settle their children over a period of time. This should be agreed between parents and teachers in the best interest of the child. Some children in Reception may need a gradual increase of time spent in school e.g morning sessions building up to morning and lunch etc. This should be agreed between the parent, teacher and head.

On admission to Nursery and Reception parents are required to complete the schools admission, providing information about their child's needs and experiences and family background.

In the term before entry to the Foundation Stage parents and children are invited to a meeting where information about the school and curriculum is given during a welcome morning. Classrooms are set up for the children to explore and they are able to meet their new classmates and teachers. Parent consultation meetings are also held at the beginning of each year to provide the opportunity for parents to share information about their child's interests and experiences.

TRANSITION

As well as transfer records, discussion between Nursery and Reception staff takes place to allow information on the new intake of children and their level of development and learning needs to be passed on. Contact is made where possible with the nurseries/playgroups etc. and parents of children coming from outside the school to allow a smooth transition.

Regular joint planning meetings between Nursery and Reception help to ensure a smooth transfer.

During the half-term before children move from Nursery to Reception, staff arrange for the children to spend some time using the infant toilets, eating lunch in the hall, playing in the infant playground and to attend some whole school assemblies.

It is helpful if the Nursery and Reception teacher can swap story times in order to get to know each other's children. This is particularly important for children moving from the Nursery to Reception.

Flexible admissions arrangements should be made for individual children to allow time for children to settle in.

Children with SEN: IEPs are handed over from Nursery to the Reception teacher concerned and where appropriate, meetings arranged between Nursery and Reception teachers, the parents/carers, SENCO and any outside agency involved before the child moves into the Reception class.

Similar arrangements are made between the Reception and Year 1 teacher before children move from the Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.

6. PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The school aims to provide a welcoming environment for parents where parents and staff can learn from each other's expertise so as to best meet the needs of each child. In the Foundation Stage, partnership with parents is ensured through both formal arrangements to meet and through daily routines.

At the beginning of the year a number of meetings are held throughout the school with the intention of developing partnerships between the school and home. These include:

- Parent consultation meetings that provide the opportunity for parents to share their knowledge and expectations of their child with the class teacher.
- Welcome morning for parents and children coming to the Foundation Stage. This provides the opportunity for parents and children to meet their classmates and teachers in their classrooms.

Parents evenings take place each term. In the spring and summer term these take the form of individual meetings with the class teacher. In the term before they start parents are invited to a curriculum evening. Early Years staff need to enable parents to understand the Early Years curriculum so that they can support their child's learning.

7. STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

All staff working in the Early Years have access to Early Years training provided by the borough, appropriate to their needs and the School Development Plan. Some school based Early Years training and INSET is provided appropriate to the needs of the school.

It is important that Early Years staff keep in touch with current developments in the Early Years field and develop expertise in meeting the needs of bilingual children in the Foundation Stage to ensure full access to the Early Years Curriculum.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Early Years policy is monitored on a regular basis. This takes the form of

- The weekly monitoring of planning
- Classroom observations ensuring policy is being implemented
- Regular Early Year team meetings.

HANOVER SCHOOL POLICY IS AN ONGOING WORKING DOCUMENT.