

Hindley J and I School



Early Years Policy

September 2025

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Mr G Doubleday (Chair of Governors)

Document Purpose

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Hindley J and I in relation to the teaching and learning experiences within the Early Years. It sets out a framework within which all staff operate and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. The policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (September 2025).

Audience

This policy document, having been presented to and agreed upon by the whole staff and the Governing Body, is available to all staff and school governors. A copy of the document is published on the school website.

Aims

Our aims in the Early Years are as follows:

- To introduce all children in Early Years to school life in a secure, stimulating environment;
- To give each child an equal opportunity to flourish and to develop his/her full potential;
- To develop confidence, an aesthetic awareness, a sense of fair play, and sound moral values for all children;
- To support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. To enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential;
- 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;
- To set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1;
- To use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress;
- To develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children;

- To provide a caring and inclusive learning environment, which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child, including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the seven key features of effective practice (Development Matters September 2023):

1. The best for every child
2. High-quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents

The EY Curriculum

Our curriculum reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EY. These 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:

- Communication and Language
 - Listening, Attention and Understanding
 - Speaking
- Physical Development
 - Gross Motor Skills

- Fine Motor Skills
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Self-Regulation
 - Managing Self
 - Building Relationships

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

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
 - Comprehension
 - Word Reading
 - Writing
- Mathematics
 - Number
 - Numerical Patterns
- Understanding of the World
 - Past and Present
 - People, Culture and Communities
 - The Natural World
- Expressive Arts and Design
 - Creating with Materials
 - Being Imaginative and Expressive

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.

Early Years pupils also participate in a daily phonics lesson. We use Read Write Inc Phonics.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

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

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Assessment

During the first few weeks of the first half term in Early Years, the statutory reception baseline assessment (RBA) is carried out by the teacher. The assessment is interactive and practical. It covers language and communication and early mathematics. These assessments will provide a snapshot of where children are when they start school in Reception. Alongside everyday observations and interactions with the children, it will allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of Early Years, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for Early Years.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging or Expected. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in Early Years is ongoing and takes the form of formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate.

The teacher keeps records of progress made through the academic year. Pupils use exercise books for Literacy, Handwriting and Phonics. Class floor books are kept to record practical learning in Mathematics and the Wider Curriculum. Photographs are uploaded to Class Dojo, both to individual portfolios and the class story page. This provides a wide range of evidence that we share with parents/carers at parent's evenings.

Tracking grids are updated at the end of each term. This provides a summary sheet for each child which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking system. We record each child's level of development to be 'beginning', 'working within' or 'secure' within the Development Matters age-bands (Birth-3 years, 3-4 years and Reception).

Baseline Data and Assessment Data at the end of each term is shared with SLT. End of year data is sent to the Dfe. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement. We share this information too at parent's evenings and in the end-of-year report.

Inclusion

All staff at Hindley J and I are responsible for ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnic origin and social circumstances have access to the whole curriculum, and the opportunity to make the greatest progress possible in all areas of the curriculum, while in our school.

Special Educational Needs

Children with special needs receive extra support within the classroom from the Reception staff and outside agencies if appropriate. Staff seek guidance and advice for these children from the SENDCo. See whole school policy on inclusion for more detail.