



## **EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY**

**Reviewed in October 2023**

**To be approved by Full Governing Body in November 2023**

## **SUBJECT LEADER : HELEN MILLER**

### **Description of the School**

Holmwood is a Primary Special School for children with a wide range of complex and multiple learning, emotional and behavioural differences. The children come from the whole of the Middlesbrough area and beyond which includes a wide social mix and an average ethnic representation.

### **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Holmwood we believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life in order for them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age 5 have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in it's own right. A strong parent partnership will provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. (EYFS 2012).

At Holmwood, we begin to develop and nurture strong positive attitudes where children become proud and respectful of themselves, others and their environment. The overall aims of the EYFS is to help young children achieve the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and eventually achieving economic wellbeing.

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

- A Unique Child - every child is a competent learner.
- Positive Relationships - children learn to be strong and independent.
- Enabling Environments - supporting and extending a child's development.
- Learning and Development - 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning and development.

The seven areas of learning and development are divided into three prime areas and four specific areas: the three prime areas, which are Foundations for Schools readiness and future progress linked with the National Curriculum areas. The three prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Physical development

These are then supported by specific areas that strengthen the prime areas. The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

The UK Council for Internet Safety's Safeguarding Children and Protecting Professionalism Early Years Setting February 2019 guidance will be followed in the EYFS settings (Reception and the Support Centre)

The prime 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.

The Unique Child reaches out to relate to people and things through the Characteristics of Effective Learning, which move through all areas of learning.

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

### **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 value our parent partnership.
- We have a small class and a high adult pupil ratio which ensure that the needs of each child are met both academically and emotionally, helping to develop each child's confidence and independence.
- Our small class enables the teachers to provide an individual education planned around the needs and experiences of each child, so that true potential can be nurtured and realized.
- We provide a rich variety of academic, social, artistic, musical and sporting experiences.
- We have welcoming, child friendly and stimulating indoor and outdoor areas.

- Routines are established so that children begin to anticipate and feel confident to take the next step. Pictorial timetables give children the security to know and understand their routines.

### **Aims**

- To help our foundation aged children aged to make progress in their development and learning and to proceed at their own level and pace.
- To provide a well planned and relevant curriculum in a stimulating early years environment to take their learning forward.
- To provide opportunities for all children to succeed, and feel valued in a caring atmosphere.
- To monitor the progress of each child so as to identify strengths and weaknesses in each of the seven areas of learning.
- To work closely with parents so that there is a good understanding about what each child already knows and what they are learning during the foundation stage.
- To identify children's specific special educational needs and to give the appropriate support to help as soon as possible.
- To celebrate each child's achievements.

At Holmwood we pride ourselves in supporting each child with their transition to 'big school'. This is achieved through the following ways:

- Teachers liaise closely with our feeder nurseries
- Each child has the opportunity to visit the school prior to starting with known staff from their current settings and again with parents.
- Photographs of staff and the classroom and playground environments are sent home to enable children to become familiar with 'new adults' and learning areas.
- Information about children's individual needs, like and dislikes is collected from previous settings and parents and carers to enable as smooth a transition as possible.

### **Observation Planning and Assessment**

At Holmwood we hold the individual child at the centre of our planning. This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and ongoing formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practise. Staff achieve this through:

- Observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child initiated activities (ChIL) and planned activities, and learning from and sharing with parents about what the child does at home.
- Considering the examples of development and: observing what children can do, and identifying the stage on their developmental pathway within the Development Matters.

- Considering ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development.
- Staff review children's progress and carry out 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.

Within 6 weeks of entering the reception class all children are assessed under the seven areas of learning and a baseline level of learning is produced. Children are continued to be assessed, whether through independent play or independent work, throughout their reception year. At the end of the year each child is given a level of learning for each area of learning. This will determine whether they meet the assessment target of the Early Learning Goals.

In September 2021 2022 we anticipate that some children may lower than previous years due to them not accessing any education for six months due to COVID-19.

### **Entitlement**

Holmwood School acknowledges and believes in the statutory entitlement to learning through the National Curriculum and The EYFS Statutory Framework. However, because of the special needs of many of our pupils, we sometimes need to differentiate and modify the curriculum in order for it to be accessible and appropriate. Many of our children will be working on the earlier developmental stages or 'Development Matters' and working towards the final end of Year early learning goals. These assessed levels from ongoing termly assessment are cross referenced against P Level assessment in the areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics to inform whole school progress records. As the Early Years class can sometimes be a mixed Reception and Y1 class planning learning objectives are taken for both EYFS and PKS, working towards Y1 objectives as and when appropriate. End of term assessment informs and helps to set appropriate and achievable termly personal EYFS and PKS targets for each child within their IEP. This information is used in end of year school reports and Annual Reviews.

Planning helps to identify and organise all the learning experiences whether directed or self initiated. It is appropriate to each child's stage of development and helps the children progress towards the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework. Within Holmwood School we are work on the developmental stages leading to the final End of Year Goals. We follow a series of short manageable topics (one each half term) across the year to deliver the curriculum. We have ensured that all of the elements of the EYFS will be covered in the chosen themes and that there is sufficient opportunity for children to re-visit and consolidate knowledge, understanding and skills. Hopefully each topic is lively, exciting and not too long and will maintain the children's interest. We meet weekly and termly to review progress and plan for the following week.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The School Self Review Programme requires that each subject is formally monitored and evaluated on a regular basis. This will be managed by the Headteacher, the Leadership Team and the Subject Co-ordinator through systematic monitoring of planning, sampling pupil's work and lesson observations.

## **Inclusion**

Holmwood School believes that all children are entitled to a full programme of access to education in all its forms. In some cases this means a much higher level of support within the Special School setting and in others this will mean access to a full and inclusive mainstream schooling.

We fully endorse the LAs approach towards a more Inclusive system and are working towards that end. We have now put ourselves in a position to support the LA as stated in its policy on inclusion.

As previously stated of our children follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum which is statutory for all early years children. However the school adapts the curriculum to best meet the needs of children. Each child has an individual learning programme to focus on the areas of learning that are important for them and to help them to learn skills to cope with their individual learning needs. As a significant number of our children have a diagnosis of autism, this includes being able to remain as calm as possible. Activities are highly motivating allowing children to become engaged and interested in learning. Communication, social skills and independence skills are also taught throughout the curriculum.

Children with autism have difficulties in social communication and social integration. They also have restricted, repetitive behaviours. Children with autism work well with clear, structured routines. They also find visual prompts help them to learn. Communication and social interaction can be very challenging for our children so we ensure that we are always teaching our children ways to communicate and tolerate others.

As well as following the EYFS curriculum we use elements from a range of different strategies shown to be effective for children with autism, but are hugely beneficial to our children with language and communication problems of general developmental delay. This enables us to best meet the needs of our children.

**The role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher will support the co-ordinator and the staff in the implementation of this policy, having regard to the needs, experience, interests, aptitudes and stage of development of the pupils.

**The role of the Local Authority**

The LA has an important role in advising, supporting and training staff to deliver the curriculum effectively and appropriately.

**Consultation**

All staff have been consulted on the draft proposals for this policy.

The policy reflects the consensus of the whole staff.

This policy will be reviewed every year as part of the School Self Review.