

Heron Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

- ‘Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage’

At Heron Primary School we recognise and value the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in preparing the children for future learning and development. However we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life.

The EYFS framework applies to children from birth to five years of age. The last year of EYFS is the reception year. At Heron the children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

Children joining our school come with a variety of experiences and have already learnt a great deal. The EYFS practitioners build on this prior learning and experience, working together with parents/carers to support and further the children’s development.

Aims

The aims of EYFS at Heron are to help children achieve the five outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

We aim to:

- Provide and deliver a relevant, broad, carefully structured, creative and balanced curriculum using both the indoor and outdoors environments

- Provide opportunities for learning, based on what the children already know and can do
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions
- Provide opportunities to learn through play
- Enable children to learn through making choices and decision making, encouraging independence and self-confidence
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, feel included, secure and valued, and have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable EYFS
- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- Be sensitive to the individual needs of each child
- use a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- Monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary

Our Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The characteristics of effective learning are a key element in the EYFS. They detail the ways in which children learn from their environment, experiences and activities. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are;

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and explore, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate, persevere 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.

Learning and Development

At Heron Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all Areas of Learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected. The children have time and freedom to become deeply involved in the activities and their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of the following Areas of Learning:

PRIME AREAS

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

SPECIFIC AREAS

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

These Areas of Learning are equally important and opportunities need to be provided in all areas to support a rounded approach to child development. At Heron we deliver all Areas of Learning through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Planning

Our curriculum is planned through a series of themes, each of which offer experiences in all Areas of Learning. However there is flexibility within our curriculum to deliver skills, knowledge and understanding, by planning appropriate play and learning experiences based on the children's interests and needs. We use a range of strategies, matching the needs of the children and identifying the best way for the children to learn at that time.

Staffing and Organisation

The maximum intake at our school is sixty pupils for each cohort. In reception there are two classes. Each class has one Class Teacher and one Teaching Assistant, maintaining a ratio of 1:15. The children have daily opportunities for structured and free-flow play, both indoors and in the EYFS outside area ('The Yard' and 'The Garden'). We (the EYFS Practitioners) act as facilitators to the children's learning. Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants liaise, and are involved in planning, preparation and assessment. We are encouraged to participate in CPD, including relevant local authority training and local cluster group training. We also conduct and attend in-house training and disseminate new initiatives, ideas and teaching methods to colleagues.

Assessment, recording and monitoring

At our school we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet each child's developmental and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

Each day we carry out formative, on-going assessments, the outcomes of which inform future planning. The majority of this type of assessment is based on observation of child-initiated or independent work. Parents/carers contribute information by completing ‘Wow Vouchers’ for their child, and also contribute to their child’s WOW Book during school holidays.

The EYFS Profile provides a framework for making judgments about children’s progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It summarises all the assessments undertaken, and makes statements about the child’s achievements against all 17 Early Learning Goals. The judgments are made on a regular basis by the Class Teachers. We also undertake in-house and local cluster group moderation.

Learning through play

Play is a powerful educational method. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practice and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have 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 feelings and re-live experiences in controlled and safe situations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level.

At Heron we support children’s learning through play by creating high quality learning environments, and ensuring uninterrupted periods for children to develop their play. We also support the children’s learning by looking for opportunities to join in the play sensitively and appropriately to enhance the play and learning further.

The Learning Environment

At Heron we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside

and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom during the school day.

Home/School Links

We recognise that Parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When Parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. We aim to develop this by:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts school
- Giving the children the opportunity to spend time with their teacher in the Summer term prior to starting school
- Inviting parents to the induction meeting in May
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress
- Organising a curriculum meeting in early September
- Encouraging Parents/carers to complete the home/school admissions forms
- Operating an "open door" policy, whereby Parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner
- Encouraging parents to complete 'Wow Vouchers', sharing and celebrating their child's achievements, and contributing to their child's WOW Book
- Inviting Parents/carers to help in the reception class or other classes in the school and to accompany children on school visits
- Encouraging Parents/carers to listen to their child read each night and to comment on reading progress in a home/school reading diary
- Encouraging relevant learning activities and library books to be undertaken/shared at home
- Providing an annual written report to Parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals and EYFS assessment scales

Safeguarding and welfare

Two members of our EYFS team have received Paediatric First Aid training. All other staff in the EYFS has had first aid training (05.09.2017).

In relation to other aspects of safeguarding and welfare in the EYFS the following information and policies should be referred to.

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DFE)
- Child Protection Policy (Keeping Children Safe in Education)
- Health & Safety
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying and Anti-Hate Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Physical Intervention & Restraint Policy
- Pupil Acceptable Internet Use Policy
- Offsite Visit Policy
- SEN Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Looked After Children Policy
- Home / School Agreement
- Starting School Booklet

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. Governors that are part of the Curriculum Committee are responsible for the EYFS. Governors have the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and subject coordinators carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.