



Respect, Achieve, Together

EYFS Policy

v. 2024

This policy was formally adopted by governors in May 2024 and will be reviewed every year.

Date of next review: May 2025



To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure our children are appropriately safeguarded, this policy is included under the safeguarding umbrella.

Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2023 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (Effective from 4 September 2023).

Statement of intent

At Heath Primary School, we recognise the importance of giving our children the best possible start to their education by planning and implementing teaching and learning opportunities that support them in reaching their full potential. We offer a curriculum that is rich in wonder and memorable experiences. It is our intention to provide a broadly enriched, rounded and stimulating learning environment, indoors and outdoors, that promotes challenge, exploration, adventure and a real love of learning. It is our intent that all children develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally in an environment which values all cultures, communities and people. We aim for children to be confident and independent, to believe in themselves and interact positively with others, where children can work with adults and peers in a climate of mutual respect to develop confidence in their ability to learn, the social skills necessary to learn and the emotional capabilities to enable them to understand their feelings and to solve problems. Warm and positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and strong relationships with parents are key. We understand that play is an integral part of learning and this is at the heart of our Early Years curriculum and we believe that the correct mix of adult directed and child initiated play ensures the best outcomes for pupils. Our children will develop the skills, attitudes and understanding that will form the basis of lifelong learning and encourage them to become useful, active members of a diverse and constantly changing society.

Implementation

We recognise that children will learn most effectively when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults who care for them. We provide a setting that encompasses a safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence that helps them to achieve their potential. We emphasise a language-rich environment by incorporating songs, nursery rhymes, stories, and sufficient time for meaningful interactions between adults and peers. Our staff ensure positive and developmental interactions, enabling children to thrive and rapidly expand their vocabulary, becoming confident communicators.

The curriculum is delivered through engaging topics enhanced by classroom activities, events, and visitors. Quality key texts, carefully selected to foster children's speech, language and communication development, support these topics. Planning remains flexible and responsive to the children's needs and interests.

Children benefit from a mix of child-initiated and adult-directed activities, with a carefully structured timetable ensuring directed teaching each day. This timetable adapts throughout the year to accommodate the evolving needs and progress of the children.

We encourage children to become early readers through a love of books and systematic phonics instruction using the Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised Programme. Mathematical thinking is developed through direct teaching and exploration, aiming to create confident mathematicians capable of applying their learning to real-life situations.

Children are given plenty of time to engage in 'Discovery Time' through a variety of carefully planned areas of the classroom and experiences designed to engage and challenge them. The curriculum is designed for both indoor and outdoor classrooms, with equal emphasis on learning in both settings. Our school environment is created to help children strengthen their core muscles through physical play, spending time outdoors in all weather.

We recognise the importance of parental engagement and believe that parents play a crucial role in their children's education. We strive to build a strong partnership between home and school. Parents can access the School weekly newsletter to see what the 'Let's get Talking' question is. They can also access the Reception termly overview on the website. They can also use Class Dojo to engage in their child's education and share home experiences.

As part of the teaching and learning process, children are assessed based on their progress towards the Early Learning Goals. These assessments are made through observations and in-depth knowledge of the children, gathered through ongoing evaluations. This information is used to inform planning and next steps in teaching and learning throughout the year.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework, 2023.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, as well as fostering children's ability to learn, build relationships and thrive.

We strive to create a high-quality teaching and learning environment dedicated to raising standards and providing appropriate challenges for all children.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we understand that children's interactions with others and their environment form the foundation for learning and development across all areas

Early Learning Goals

Prime Areas

Communication and Language

Physical Development

Personal Social and Emotional Development

Specific Areas

Literacy Expressive

Maths

Arts and Design

Understanding the World

Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

Playing and Exploring

Active Learning

Creating and Thinking Critically

Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Upon children's entry to school, we place a strong emphasis on the three prime areas of learning.

We consider each child's individual needs, interests and developmental stage to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences. For children with special educational needs or disabilities, staff assess whether specialist support is required and coordinate with relevant external services as needed.

In planning and guiding activities, staff reflect on the diverse ways children learn and incorporate these approaches into their practice.

Our enabling environment and warm, skilful adult interactions help children connect learning with play and exploration. Our curriculum acknowledges each child's skill development, offering opportunities for rehearsal, consolidation, application, connection and extension of their learning.

We strive for a healthy balance of child-initiated learning and adult-led activities, encouraging children to become confident, capable learners who enjoy exploring their own ideas and theories. Practitioners observe, support, discuss, challenge, extend and scaffold learning through developmentally appropriate planned activities. Enhanced provision, led by children's interests and the current topic, ensures that each child can reach their full potential.

Recognising play as the building block of intellectual, social, emotional, physical and language development, we dedicate time to child-initiated learning where staff respond to, extend, scaffold, and engage in quality conversations to support learning. We recognise the importance of providing a meaningful language-rich environment, enabling children to express themselves and engage in conversations with peers and adults. Throughout the day, we share stories, poems, and songs, using language to support vocabulary and thinking skills.

Phonics

To teach reading and writing, we follow Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised (a systematic synthetic phonics approach) and it is enhanced by provision in the classroom.

Maths

Maths is taught using the Mastering Number scheme, which emphasises exploring concepts through a child's contextual understanding and real-life experiences. Our enhanced provision supports maths learning and our adult-focused sessions aim to deepen understanding and build number sense. Our provision allows children to explore, investigate and develop their understanding of shape, space and measurement.

Continuous Provision

We highly value imagination and creativity, aiming to foster a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning through continuous indoor and outdoor provision. Our continuous provision plans ensure that each area of learning is well-resourced and equipped, allowing children to learn, practice, transfer and develop skills.

Teaching

Every aspect of learning and development is implemented through deliberate, purposeful play, incorporating a blend of activities led by adults and initiated by children. Staff attentively address each child's evolving needs and interests, nurturing their growth through nurturing, positive engagement.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for the next stage of their learning.

The features of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- the fostering of a close partnership between practitioners and parents, so that our children feel secure at school from the onset and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that our practitioners have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;

the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage;

- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management; the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all practitioners working within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Playing and Exploring – Engagement

We believe well-planned play both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge during the Early Years Foundation Stage. Through play that is planned in a secure environment and with effective adult support, children can:

explore, develop and represent learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world;

practise and build up ideas, concepts and skills;

learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules;

be alone, be alongside others or co-operate as they talk and express their feelings;

take risks and make mistakes;

think creatively and imaginatively;

communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems;

express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Our goal is to ensure that learning is both a rewarding and enjoyable experience during which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, these elements of learning are effectively brought together through play and conversation.

Active Learning – Motivation

Active learning takes place when children are motivated and engaged. It is essential for children to have a degree of independence and control over their learning process. As children gain confidence, they learn to make decisions, leading to a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning journey.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

Children should have the chance to express creativity across all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults play a pivotal role in nurturing children's thinking and facilitating connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and concepts and asking open-ended questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

The Environment

We understand the vital role the environment plays in supporting and enhancing children's development. This begins by assessing each child's interests, stage of development, and learning, enabling us to plan stimulating yet achievable activities and experiences that extend their learning.

Our classroom is thoughtfully organised to provide a secure and safe space for children to explore and learn. Various areas cater to different needs, allowing children to engage in active, quiet, or restful activities. Learning areas are structured to empower children to independently locate and utilise equipment and resources. With access to an enclosed outdoor area, children can explore and learn in a different context, fostering sensory exploration and physical activity. Our planning encompasses activities and resources both indoors and outdoors, designed to promote development across all learning domains and cultivate a positive attitude towards learning.

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe pupils to determine their levels of achievement, interests, and learning styles. These observations inform future planning. Additionally, staff consider observations shared by parents and/or caregivers.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Early Years Foundation Stage Assessments

are updated at 4 assessment points throughout the year; Baseline, End of Autumn, End of Spring and Final. Children are assessed against the ‘Reception Goals’ and ‘Nursery Goals’ checkpoint documents, created collaboratively by Embark Federation EYFS colleagues. At the end of the EYFS, pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

Meeting expected levels of development

Working towards reaching expected levels of development

The assessments reflect ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers and these shared with parents and/or carers.

Assessments are moderated within the Embark Federation to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Working with Parents/ Carers

We recognise that children learn and develop best when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents or caregivers.

Parents play a crucial role in their child's education. We believe it is essential for all Early Years practitioners to work closely with parents and other caregivers. When parents and practitioners collaborate, it positively impacts a child's development and learning. Valuing and building on children's previous learning experiences helps foster these partnerships. We acknowledge the role parents have played and will continue to play in their children's education. We do this through:

- the children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school. We do this through Stay and Play sessions where parents and children, who are new to school, are invited;
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school. They will get to see their child's classroom and learn about the year ahead;
- inviting parents to a formal meeting for parents each term, at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- encouraging parents to comment on progress in reading through the use of the reading diary;
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;

Transition

Transitioning from a pre-school setting or moving within the school can be daunting for both parents and children. Our goal is to make this transition as smooth and comfortable as possible for everyone involved. Class Teachers and Teaching and Learning Assistants collaborate closely with professionals within the school and other settings, arranging visits for the children to familiarise themselves with their new environment. We maintain regular communication with parents and professionals to gain a comprehensive understanding of each child and their needs. Our aim is for every child to visit the classroom during the summer term before they start school.

Impact

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children make good progress from their individual starting points. By the end of their time in EYFS, all children will have experienced a curriculum rich with exciting and enriching learning opportunities, including events, visitors, and practical experiences. Our young learners will gain an appreciation and understanding of the world through exposure to different cultures, celebrations, music, science, dance, art, geography and history.

Children will be encouraged to ask questions about the world around them and their learning experiences. They will learn to take risks, seeing these as opportunities to learn. They will discuss their successes and failures with peers and adults, using these experiences to improve or adjust their approach.

Throughout their time with us, children will make progress towards meeting the national expectations for a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the year. They will develop characteristics of effective learning, applying their knowledge to various situations, making connections, and explaining their ideas and understanding. We attribute our high standards to our carefully planned environment, enriched play-based curriculum, quality first teaching, and rigorous assessment.

Admissions Policy

All children are admitted full time in September, in line with the school's admission policy. Any timetable reductions to meet pupil needs are discussed on an individual basis with parents/carers.

Safeguarding

Through our PSED educational programme we promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth.

At Heath Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023.

We understand that we are required to:

- Have and implement a child protection policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.
- Have and implement a policy that covers the safe use of mobile phones and cameras in settings (see the ‘Personal Electronic Devices’ section of our Child Protection Policy).
- Designate a member of staff to take lead responsibility for safeguarding children within our setting.
- Train all staff to understand our safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.
- Have regard to the government’s statutory guidance for ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023’ and to the ‘Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales 2023’.
- Have regard to the government’s ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ (Updated 2023) statutory guidance.
- Inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person working, or looking after children on our premises.
- Ensure all adults who look after our children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so. All employees have DBS checks every three years and complete annual declarations.
- Ensure at least one member of staff who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must be on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and must accompany children on outings.
- Ensure staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.
- Ensure the staff/child ratios meet the requirements for each age group of children as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. ‘For children aged two, there must be at least one member of staff for every five children. At least one member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification and at least half of all other staff must hold an approved level 2 qualification. For children aged three and over, there must be at least one member of staff for every 13 children. At least one member of staff must be a school teacher and at least one other member of staff must hold an approved level 3 qualification. Reception classes, follow infant class size legislation and should have no more than 30 pupils per school teacher’.
- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, including the oral health, of children preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Ensure there is a first aid box accessible at all times with appropriate content for use with children. For Reception pupils this is kept in the staff room, for nursery pupils this is kept in the kitchen and 2s Provision this is kept in the staff room.

- Record accidents or injuries and first aid treatment on Medical Tracker and inform parents and/or carers of any accident or injury sustained by the child on the same day, or as soon as reasonably practicable, of any first aid treatment given.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs. (See Behaviour Policy).
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that we take all reasonable steps to ensure staff and children in our care are not exposed to risks and demonstrate how we are managing risks. (See Health and Safety policy).
- Maintain records and obtain and share information to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

All of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.

Equal Opportunities

All children within the Early Years Foundation Stage at Heath Primary School must be given full access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Staff will endeavour to help all children to reach their full potential irrespective of race, gender, age or ability.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all, children with special educational needs, children who are more able and are gifted or talented, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Monitoring and Review

The Head teacher, EYFS Lead, Safeguarding lead and Governors will carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Review date: Annually