



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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1. Purpose and Aims of this policy

Our school aims reflect our commitment to developing our children academically and as young people.

'Achieve, Believe, Care'

We work in partnership with our children and their families to fulfil our core purpose-ensuring that our children have the wisdom and courage to make positive choices now, and in their futures.

We work together to:

- broaden our children's minds and increase their aspirations, enabling every child to **achieve** their full potential
- raise our children's self-**belief** and confidence through celebrating effort, hard work, progress and successes
- support every child to show **care** for themselves, others and the world around them

We achieve this by:

- creating a family atmosphere where all members of our school community feel cared for
- offering an ambitious, progressive curriculum which challenges children to build on their existing knowledge and skills
- delivering consistently high-quality teaching and learning
- providing a safe, supportive, inclusive and stimulating environment of which we can all be proud
- nurturing a culture of respect and appreciation

2. Statutory Framework

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

At Howley Grange, we have 2 reception classes offering a total of 60 places (30 in each class)-full-time hours. There is a qualified teacher responsible for the teaching and learning in each class and they are well supported by highly experienced teaching assistants. We operate as a unit so during our 'Learning Links' and 'Discovery Time', children are able to socialise and work with peers and adults from the other Reception class. They, too, have regular access to an outdoor area, which is specifically for our reception children.

4. Curriculum

Our Early Years Foundation Stage here at Howley Grange follows the statutory curriculum requirements as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applied from September 2021. We offer a broad and balanced curriculum that covers the statutory aspects as well as other knowledge and skills to support children's personal development, prepare children for their next stage of education

and develop the whole child. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 3 areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

These are also underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning, as detailed in the framework:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf

A yearly overview and Development Matters: Birth to Five which, along with the individual needs and interests of the children, are all used to plan learning experiences and enhanced provision to provide all children with the opportunity to achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs)-in each of the 7 areas of learning.

Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff, in consultation with Miss Williams our SENDco, consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated (known as 'Learning Links and 'Discovery Time') activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions, which over time ensures positive working relationships between children and staff.

Drawing Club

Drawing Club is an approach to early writing that inspires children to develop their creativity, imagination and literacy skills through drawing, storytelling and mark-making. Using carefully selected books each week, children explore stories and bring their ideas to life through drawing before developing these into early writing. Each session focuses on one of three key elements: a character, setting or adventure, providing opportunities to develop vocabulary, explore story structure and express their own ideas.

A key feature of Drawing Club is the use of code words, which encourage children to add extra meaning and detail to their drawings and writing. These imaginative prompts invite children to think beyond their initial ideas, introducing opportunities to include descriptive language, labels, words and sentences. Code words help children make meaningful connections between their pictures and written language, supporting the development of vocabulary, early writing skills and sentence construction at an appropriate level for their stage of development. Through this approach, children are encouraged to experiment with language, develop their confidence as writers and discover the enjoyment of creating their own stories and ideas.

Phonics and Reading

Phonics is explicitly taught as a whole class daily. Phonics teaching is underpinned by the scheme: Bug Club Phonics. This links to our reading scheme: Phonics Bug. The reading books which our children are given to read and share at home link to their phonic ability. To ensure that our children experience success when reading, we ensure that they are able to recognise the graphemes within the next unit before moving onto books within that unit. Children also acquire knowledge of graphemes and associated phonemes through various activities available in our 'Learning Links' time.

'Learning Links' Time

'Learning Links' Time takes place each morning and provides children with opportunities to engage in a variety of literacy and mathematics-based activities linked to our weekly theme. These activities are carefully planned to support children's learning and development within the EYFS, encouraging them to develop their skills, knowledge, independence and confidence through meaningful, hands-on experiences. Each week, every child will work with an adult to complete both a Drawing Club activity and a themed mathematics activity (underpinned by the scheme White Rose). Drawing Club supports children's creativity, communication, language, storytelling and early writing skills, while the mathematics activity develops their early mathematical understanding, including skills such as counting, number recognition, pattern and problem-solving. Children will also have opportunities to explore related activities independently, allowing them to practise, consolidate and apply their learning through play.

Discovery Time

Discovery Time takes place each afternoon and provides children with opportunities to explore, investigate and learn through a range of engaging, play-based experiences. Daily activities focus on developing children's learning across the EYFS, with particular emphasis on Understanding the World, Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Expressive Arts and Design (EAD), and Communication and Language (CLL). These experiences encourage children to develop their curiosity, creativity, communication skills, relationships and understanding of the world around them.

On **Muddy Mondays**, Physical Development is a particular focus as children take part in our Forest School experiences. Through a variety of outdoor activities, children develop both their fine and gross motor skills, including opportunities to climb, balance, dig and handle natural materials. These experiences support the development of strength, coordination, confidence and independence while fostering a love of nature and outdoor learning.

Across the week, Discovery Time provides children with opportunities to follow their interests, explore new ideas and develop their skills and understanding through purposeful play and hands-on experiences.

5. Assessment

At Howley Grange, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe children to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning: adult-led activities, child-initiated activities and specific interventions. Half termly, the progress of the children is reflected upon to ascertain whether they are on track to achieve the Early Learning Goal and if there are any concerns in relation to this, if concerns are apparent, intervention is planned to mitigate the concern. In line with the rest of the school, Reception children and their progress are discussed in progress meetings with a member of the senior leadership team.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), statutory in schools in England as of September 2021. It is a short, online assessment focusing on their early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills. The children do not know that they are completing it as it is labelled as a 'job' and the transition between that and 'Discovery' time, where the children learn through child-initiated play, appears seamless.

Here at Howley, we are aware of the impact of language development on a child's learning. We carry out WELCOMM screening checks on the children when they begin their journey with us and then regularly thereafter and provide interventions if and when required. Similarly, teaching our children to read fluently, comprehend what it is they have read and most importantly foster a love of reading is something which we are incredibly passionate about here at Howley Grange. We recognise that teaching our children to read as soon as possible gives them the tools they need to access the rest of the curriculum; it is crucial to their progress across all areas of the curriculum-now and in their futures. With this in mind, we complete regular phonics checks to ascertain that children have retained the phonemes they have been taught and are able to segment and blend in line with their phonics stage of development.

At the end of the EYFS (during the summer term in which a child turns 5), staff complete the EYFS Profile (EYFSP) for each child. Children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, a teacher's professional judgement of children's attainment based on their quality interactions with them throughout the year and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) to ensure consistent assessment judgements. We also seek and maximise any opportunities for cross-school moderation. EYFS Profile data is submitted to the Local Authority.

6. Communication with parents/carers

Here at Howley, we recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers and this is something we pride ourselves on. Parents and/or

carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. This is done through regular written reports and parents' evenings.

Each child is assigned a key person, their class teacher, who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The class teacher supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The class teacher also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

7. Links to other policies

This policy is written in line with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use policy
- Online safety policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Equality policy
- SEN policy

Policy written by: Kate Trueman-Brown

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Date of next review: October 2028