



Himbleton CofE First School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Our Vision:

Fostering enquiring minds and reflective hearts.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils.

Introduction

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many of them have been to a range of settings that exist in surrounding communities. The early year's education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do,
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged,
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors,
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment

Early Years Education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Himbleton First School.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

In the policy the term 'setting' refers to the Early Years educational provision at Himbleton First School which includes both the Nursery and Reception classes.

In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff (both teaching and non-teaching) working with children within the setting.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS setting at Himbleton First School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

We aim to support each child's welfare, learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special;
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates in all areas of development;
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them;
- Fostering and nurturing children's self-confidence and self-esteem through developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community;
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways;
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making, supporting them to learn through their mistakes;
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously;
- Supporting children to develop care, respect and appreciation for others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions which differ to their own;
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development;
- Providing learning experiences in play which reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn;
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development;
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework

Teaching in the EYFS setting at Himbleton First School is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (March 2012). This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, and learning and development requirements through four themes: 'A Unique Child', 'Positive Relationships', 'Enabling Environments' and the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'.

The curriculum has 7 areas of learning.

These include 3 prime areas of learning:

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

And four specific areas of learning which strengthen the prime areas:

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

The curriculum delivered  in this setting involves activities and experiences from these seven areas of learning. These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all Areas of Learning and Development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centered curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All Areas of Learning and Development are given equal weighting and value.

At Himbleton First School, we believe that Early Years education is important in its own right. The Early year's framework enables a natural progression into the National Curriculum and we encourage participation in whole school activities and initiatives, demonstrating a positive part of our whole school community.

Learning through Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They can express fears and learn to manage their own risks in environments where they feel safe and trusted.

At Himbleton First School we recognise that young children learn best when they are active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS setting has an ethos of learning is fun.

We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

In the EYFS setting at Himbleton First School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate and develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, gaining a deeper understanding of their skills and level of understanding.

Outdoor Learning

Children need the opportunity to learn outdoors as well as indoors. There are always planned activities and continuous provision opportunities for the children to access outdoors. A

continuous provision system works throughout the day whereby children have opportunities to learn inside or outside, independently, in groups or with adult support. They are able to raise their own awareness and natural curiosity about the world around them.

In doing so we:-

- Promote a developing interest in the immediate environment of the school site.
- Encourage use of a different range of resources
- Provide opportunities to extend the cross curricular work from the indoors
- Stimulate further their curiosity about living things
- Provide interesting and exciting direct experiences
- Allow the children to learn in an environment where they feel confident and safe

We have a large designated outdoor learning space which is used by Nursery and Reception children. We are currently enhancing this area to incorporate some different areas in which to learn. These will include a sensory garden, investigative area, digging patches, mud kitchen, sand and water areas and a musical space, along with the design of a new shelter and more appropriate access to the outdoor classroom.

The EYFS regularly use the Forest areas within school and the adventure playground, to promote many skills, including physical activity and gross motor skills.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Himbleton First School. Regular assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is monitored through 'Tapestry', an online Learning Journey.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out observations of individuals and groups of children regularly, making spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats (e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, photographs, iPads). All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered, along with photographic evidence and observations.

There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the new Early Years Foundation Stage Development Matters. This is updated once each term to track individual progress. At the end of the year the EYFS Profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Baseline assessment is carried out during the

children's first few weeks upon entering the setting. Judgements are made on children's development and are based on practitioners' evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all Areas of Learning and Development.

Children are defined as having reached a good level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage if they achieve at least the 'expected' level in the Early Learning Goals in the prime areas of learning (personal, social and emotional development; physical development; and communication and language) and in the specific areas of mathematics and literacy.

Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year.

Although planning is prepared in advance, delivery is responsive to the developing needs of the children throughout the Early Years. The children's own ideas and needs are included in the planning stage.

Medium term overview planning is created each half term and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

All Areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities indoors and in the outdoor environment.

Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the Early Years.

Parents as Partners

At Himbleton First School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. So, practitioners endeavor to encourage the regular sharing of information about the children with parents.

We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. Through questionnaires and informal chats at the beginning and end of the day, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes). This supports practitioners in establishing interesting and stimulating learning experiences, responding to children's needs and interests. We send home WOW cards for parents to complete referring to any 'star' moments outside of school.

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through letters, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. This also gives suggestions of how parents can support their children's learning at home; consolidating and building on what has been covered in the setting. Whole school newsletters are also sent home on a regular basis.

Parents are invited to attend parents' consultations during the course of the academic year. The first of these takes place during the autumn term to allow practitioners and parents to discuss how children have settled into the setting. Another parent's evening takes place during the spring term where practitioners will feedback on children's learning and development progress.

Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include access to Tapestry at home and end of year reports where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons and stay and play sessions, where children show them their work and special events.

The setting has a friendly, open-door ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the beginning and end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have.

Admission and Transition

Himbleton First School provides Early Years education for children in both Nursery, from the term after their 3rd birthday, and in the Reception Year for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old.

See School Admissions Policy for more information.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

All staff at Himbleton First School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting.

All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting.

Inclusion

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence,
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs,
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively,
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- Planning challenge activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills

- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

See School Inclusion Policy.

Other related Policies

The Early Years follow guidelines laid down in main School policies including:-

- Equal Opportunities
- Inclusion
- Health and Safety
- Behaviour
- Learning and Teaching
- Admissions
- Assessment, Recording and Reporting