



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Introduction to the EYFS

At Horsley, the children follow 'The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Curriculum' during their reception year and work towards meeting their Early Learning Goals by the end of the first year. At Horsley C of E Primary School, we value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying the secure foundations for future learning and development and therefore we pride ourselves in offering the best to our children as they start their journey with us. We have close links with Horsley Playgroup, where several of our children naturally transition from.

The 7 main areas of the EYFS are:

Prime areas of learning-

1. Personal, social and emotional development (building relationships and self-regulation)
2. Communication and language (speaking and listening)
3. Physical development (using fine and gross motor skills)

Specific areas of learning-

4. Literacy (reading and writing)
5. Mathematics (number and numerical patterns)
6. Understanding of the world (past & present, the natural world, people, culture and communities)
7. Expressive arts and design (creating with materials and performing)

There is great emphasis on promoting personal, social and emotional development in the reception year. Children are taught to share and socialise, respect themselves, others and their surroundings and develop a positive sense of who they are. These are the foundations upon which their learning can develop and thrive.

Most of the learning during reception takes place through structured play. Every half term we have an overarching topic to fit the children's interests. Some topic examples include; 'What a Wonderful World', 'Once Upon a Time' and 'Superheroes'. There are also many opportunities for children to explore their own interests and ideas through child-initiated play as exploring individual areas of interest is a key part of the EYFS Curriculum.

Children are encouraged to choose their own resources and develop their own projects as they play (e.g. making things they are interested in, role playing a story, mark making/writing the sounds we have been practising). Adults join in and extend the children's learning by asking questions or making suggestions; they observe and record what children are doing.

Adults also hear children read, play games, and carry out more formal work, e.g. a set writing task or practising counting and calculating.

We regularly go on outings and encourage visitors into school to enhance our topic work. Seasonal Walks in the local area are routine at Horsley and we are fortunate to have links with lots of locally skilled individuals who come in and share their amazing talents with us!

Characteristics of Effective Learning in EYFS:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying 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

Aims

- The most important consideration in the Reception Year is to ensure that our children enjoy a smooth and gradual transition from home to school, free from stress and anxiety. Every effort is made to encourage good communication between the school and parents as well as the children and their pre-school settings before they start school.
- At Horsley, we aim to provide a learning environment where children will work towards meeting all the Early Learning goals through first hand experiences, child-initiated and adult-led activities and play.
- We want our children to have choice in their learning, to foster their independence and their self-confidence from a young age.
- We provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring, environment which is sensitive to the needs of all children including those with additional needs.
- We acknowledge the importance of working with families to ensure the best start in every child’s education and learning journey.

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the 2014 (updated 2024) statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/78122/early_years_foundation_stage_2014.pdf)

Planning within the EYFS

Good quality planning is the key to making children's learning real-life, exciting and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS will be put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests and levels of understanding.

Long term planning:

Every half term a new exciting topic is carefully planned for and delivered to the EYFS children. Copies of our 'topic webs' are published on our school website at the beginning of every half term for parents to see what their child will be engaging with. This planning structure helps staff to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum which works towards children achieving their early learning goals (ELGs) is provided across the academic year.

Short term planning:

In addition to our topic webs, staff produce a weekly planning overview to identify specific learning outcomes they will cover, resources and types of support they will use and how staff will be deployed. This ensures that the needs of all children are met through careful differentiation. This approach leaves room for flexibility as we understand that EYFS should focus heavily on child-led learning.

Assessment within the EYFS

At Horsley 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 process allows us to plan the next steps to meet the development and learning needs for all of our children.

Baseline assessment:

During the first term in reception we assess the abilities of each child using the Development Matters Statements and Early Learning Goals. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is a short statutory assessment, taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts reception. In addition to the RBA, at Horsley we do informal assessments of the children's starting points to help identify the children's needs. The children do not feel as if they are being 'assessed' as staff discretely observe children through their exploration and play. We appreciate that all children are on their own learning journey and this assessment process allows us to support all individuals effectively.

Formative assessment:

In EYFS at Horsley we use paper-based learning journeys. We compile a book of photographs accompanied with observations, capturing the children's voice, as well as evidence of their markings, creations and work. These observations then contribute to each child's EYFS profile and allow for individual next steps to be identified across the reception year and beyond.

Summative assessment:

Throughout the academic year, EYFS staff make judgements on the children's progress in line with the development matters guidance three times a year (Christmas, Easter and Summer term 2). This information is uploaded to our school assessment system - Insight Tracker and is used to monitor individual progress. All seventeen early learning goals (ELGs) are monitored across the year to gather form a clear picture of the children's learning journey.

In the final term of reception, staff assess children against the EYFS profile. This profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their attainment against expected levels, and their readiness for year 1. It is our responsibility to make a professional judgment (based on all the evidence we have gathered across the year) to indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This information will be shared with parents in the end of year report (sent out in July) and can be discussed with the class teacher during an informal parents evening.

Our learning environment

In our EYFS classroom we have an art area (paints, glue, different kinds of paper, junk materials and collage materials), a writing table (paper, pens, envelopes, stickers, paperclips etc.), an ICT area (computers, ipads, calculators and programmable toys) and a funky fingers area to promote fine motor control. We regularly update our role play area with new and exciting themes to fit our topics, along with a book corner that offers a range of fiction and non-fiction books for children to browse that link closely to our topic.

Children have the option to go outside each day onto the decking area where they can explore a mud kitchen, sand, water, PE equipment, large construction materials and other small pretend world resources. Some sessions are based in the playground where children have access to bikes and scooters, large outdoor play equipment and the natural area.

Our school site is fortunate to house a spacious forest school area where our children are taken on a regular basis to explore seasonal changes. The children put on their wet weather gear and wellies and go outside come rain or shine.

We encourage our children to make their own selections of activities to promote their independence, and we regularly rotate resources to stimulate curiosity amongst learners.

Partnership with parents

Working closely with our families is something that we pride ourselves on at Horsley. To ensure that our children transition smoothly from home to school:

- Children at Horsley playgroup attend weekly pre-school sessions based in our reception classroom from spring term. This partnership helps to ease the children into school life very smoothly in September.
- Host an information evening in July with new parents prior to children entering school to familiarise them with school life and the reception year. This helps to inform families about our induction programme.
- EYFS staff try to visit children in their pre-school setting or communicate with settings if a visit is not possible in their final summer term before starting school.
- We welcome children in for a transition morning at the end of July to meet their class mates and get a feel for the new classroom environment.
- Children are all given an 'All about me' scrapbook to fill in over the summer break. These books then come to school with the child in September as a lovely ice-breaker and conversation starter. They live in our book corner all year and can be a great comfort to the children.
- The first week in September is assigned for home visits. Every child is offered an individual home visit by class teacher and TA- this is an invaluable chance for staff to get to know the child in their familiar environment.
- We adopt a staggered start in September to help children to settle in and staff to get to know individual needs.
- Once the child has started school, parent/teacher meetings are arranged in October and a further meeting is scheduled in the Spring.
- Either the class teacher or TA will always be available on the gate before or after school for an informal chat. We value open discussion and are always here to listen to parents concerns as we know that our parents are the experts when it comes to their child.
- Parents are invited to share children's successes at our weekly celebration assemblies and are invited in to share the children's work at regular intervals throughout the year.

Inclusion in EYFS

All children, regardless of gender, race, circumstances or ability have an equal entitlement to access the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum at an appropriate level. At Horsley School we believe that all of our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their very best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by:

- Providing early intervention where necessary and working closely with our pre-school links to ensure that children's individual needs are identified promptly.

- Staff are experienced in setting individualised support plans for children with specific learning needs and ensure that targeted support is in place to aid smooth transition.
- Planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a variety of differentiated teaching and learning strategies that are based on children's needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively.
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitoring children's progress, and providing support within school or from external agencies as necessary.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by teaching our children about the importance of caring for themselves and others around them. We teach good personal hygiene and self-care through our SCARF PSHE curriculum. As part of our 'superheroes' topic we invite in local doctors, nurses and dentists to talk to the children about looking after their physical and mental health. Additionally, we have annual visits from the CORAM life education team who teach our EYFS children about balanced diets, exercise and caring for our personal needs.

All additional information about how safeguarding and welfare is promoted in our school can be found in our [Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy](#).

Monitoring arrangements

Our EYFS department, as well as the rest of the school will be regularly monitored and reviewed by members of SLT and our governing body to ensure that high standards are consistent throughout. Our robust monitoring cycle includes regular book looks, lesson drop-ins and pupil progress meetings.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See Health and Safety Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Health and Safety Policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See Health and Safety Policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Complaints Policy