



Holywell C of E Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

November 2024

Contents

- **A Unique Child**
- **Inclusion**
- **Welfare and Safeguarding**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**
- **Playing and Exploring Active Learning**
- **Creativity and Critical Thinking**
- **Observation, Assessment and Planning**
- **Transition**
- **Equal Opportunities**
- **British Values**
- **Monitoring and Review**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right.

Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. ('The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.' DfE March 2021).

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year.

The majority of our children join the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

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.**

A Unique Child

At Holywell we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We know that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by their school and home environments and we begin to build links with the families. We observe how each child learns to gain an understanding of the characteristics they develop to become effective learners. We use questioning, praise and encouragement to develop a positive attitude to learning and high self-esteem. During their first year at school, the children are introduced to the learning habits. They are taught to be observant, investigative, curious, determined, imaginative, adventurous, co-operative and to use reasoning. Children begin to understand the concept of the growth mindset. They are taught that they can 'grow their brains' so that they understand that everyone can learn with practice and effort. The children are taught how to learn and how to become successful learners.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our schools. We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate because of differences. All children at Holywell are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or stage of learning. We do not group children based on notions of fixed ability. We teach the children that practice and effort lead to learning and improvement.

In our school we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

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

In the EYFS 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 through a creative curriculum and learning environment
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs
- providing a wide range of opportunities and environments to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively
- providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which each child's contribution is valued
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping
- planning challenging 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

Welfare and Safeguarding

It is important to us that all children in the school are safe. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

At Holywell, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage. We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.

- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Health and Safety

There are clear procedures for assessing risk which include procedures for keeping children safe during outings and for any aspects of the environment or provision that may require a further risk assessment. In addition to this, an annual risk assessment is conducted of the EYFS and in the staff handbooks, safeguarding and child protection policies, there is detailed information and procedures to ensure the safety of the children. The EYFS risk assessment must be read in conjunction with other relevant whole school policies.

In line with the EYFS statutory framework, at Holywell we undertake;

- A whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Medicines (both prescription and non-prescription) are only administered to a child where written permission for that particular medicine has been obtained from the child's parent and/or carer." A written record is kept each time a medicine is administered to a child and informs the child's parents and/or carers on the same day." (Statutory framework for EYFS 2012)
- Fresh drinking water and healthy snacks are available at all times
- Children's' dietary needs are recorded and acted upon when required
- A first aid box is accessible at all times and a record of accidents and injuries is kept (see accident and injury policy).
- EYFS staff are paediatric first aid trained.
- The Head teacher is the named behaviour manager
- A health and safety policy and procedures which cover identifying, reporting and dealing with accidents, hazards and faulty equipment.
- A fire and emergency evacuation procedure and policy
- A safeguarding policy stating how mobile phones and cameras are to be used whilst children are in the setting. Cameras that are used in school must not be used for staff own personal use.
- All staff and regular helpers have DBS checks

Positive Relationships

At Holywell we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through the development of secure relationships. We develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role in educating their children. We do this through:

- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again during the first half term of the child's reception year in order to detail how we aim to work with their child particularly in relation to supporting learning at home.
- Talking to parents about their child (including a home visit); encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns and operating an 'open door' policy.
- Encouraging parents to attend consultation meetings in the first two terms to discuss their child's progress and next steps.
- Providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Encouraging parents to contribute observations from home and celebrate achievements using the online learning platform, Seesaw.
- Sharing our approach to teaching Reading and Phonics including weekly communication through reading diaries.
- Regular information about topics, activities and ideas to share at home.
- Inviting parents to help in the reception class, accompanying children on school visits, during forest school, celebration events, open days and fundraising activities.

Staff develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

We have good links with the local feeder playgroups and regular visits are undertaken throughout the year. The EYFS teachers meet with staff to discuss new intake children.

Enabling Environments

"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging indoor and outdoor spaces." EYFS, Department for Children, Schools and Families.

At Holywell we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet or rest. The classrooms are set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS class has their own enclosed outdoor area. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use their senses, develop their language and be physically active. We plan activities and resources for the children to access both indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. The children attend weekly Forest School sessions in our local village wood or on the school site where they have the opportunity to build dens, climb trees, look for bugs, whittle sticks and toast marshmallows over an open fire.

Learning and Development

At Holywell 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 seven 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

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's levels of development are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. This may also include a discussion with the SENCo in order to access special educational needs support.

Religious Education is taught in the EYFS classes in accordance with Cambridgeshire guidelines.

Learning Through Play

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. The adults model play and play sensitively with the children fitting in with their plans and ideas. The children are encouraged to try new activities and judge risks for themselves. We talk to them about how we get better at things through effort and practice and that we can all learn when things go wrong. They practice and build up ideas learning 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.

Playing and Exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children can be inquisitive, creative, questioning and experimental and will learn at their highest level. Playing with their peers is important for children's development."

Children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. At Holywell School we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, and decide when child initiated or adult led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support

children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods."

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The Planning within the EYFS is based around termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teachers as a guide for weekly planning and learning. However the teacher may alter these plans in response to the needs, achievements and interests of the children.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs and next steps. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of formal and informal observations. Staff complete the statutory Baseline within the first few weeks of the children starting school. Staff use observations and photographs to evidence children's learning on Seesaw. These observations together with parental contributions are recorded in children's individual Learning Journeys on Seesaw.

At the end of the Reception year in school, all children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals and this is recorded onto the Early Years Profile. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the ELGs and a short report on their Characteristics of Learning and next steps for Year One.

Transition

From Pre-school/Feeder settings

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception Year the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition:

- Parents are invited to workshops to share information about starting school
- The children are invited to play sessions in their new reception class
- Parents are invited to spend time in the new classroom

- Members of staff make visits to the pre-schools/feeder settings and share information in order to support the children's transition
- Children and parents are invited to stay for lunch
- Children and parents are invited to celebrations and activities during the summer term
- Children and parents are invited to a Forest School session
- Every child is offered a home visit

From Reception Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in reception the EYFS profile is completed for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year One.

- Teachers meet to discuss each child's progress, next steps and characteristics of learning
- Reception children visit their new teacher and spend time in their new classroom
- Learning Journeys are passed to Year One teachers to inform planning and remain accessible to children and families on Seesaw.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school are treated as individuals. We aim to meet the needs of all, taking account of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, special educational needs, disability, and social circumstances. All staff are aware of the need for the curriculum to reflect cultural diversity and the need to prepare pupils for life in a diverse and multi-faith society.

British Values

The children in EYFS talk about British Values during circle times. Regular opportunities are provided for voting on ideas to recognise democracy. Daily discussion following on from independent learning, regularly address mutual respect and individual liberty. The characteristics of effective learning form the basis for these discussions.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher and Foundation Stage Leader will be carrying out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule. Copies of these scrutinies will be shared with the Head Teacher and Governors.

Date to be reviewed: September 2026