



**Early Years
Foundation
Stage (EYFS)
Policy**

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy: Hawthorns Special School

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2017 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

What is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a framework that sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered Early Years providers must follow the EYFS framework. The framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and is designed to be flexible so that staff can follow each child's unique interests and needs. It gives professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare.

At Hawthorns:

We recognise that every child is unique and our Early Years Practitioners work to develop enabling and responsive learning environments which suit the learning styles and interests of each individual child. At Hawthorns, there are a number of older children who require an Early Years curriculum in order to meet their needs. Early intervention and strong collaboration between other professionals, ensures that all pupils, regardless of their SEN, have the best start to school life.

Our Early Years Classes aim to:

- Give each child a happy, positive and enjoyable start to school life;
- Build upon prior learning by working in partnership with parents, carers, previous settings and a wide range of professionals;
- Help each child to establish solid foundations for future learning and development, particularly with regards to functional communication, independence and self-care;
- Provide each child with a wide range of new and exciting experiences, and give them opportunities to consolidate existing skills and to learn new ones;
- Support each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally through high expectations, praise and positivity;
- Celebrate each child's personal successes and achievements together with their families.

At Hawthorns teachers work closely with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, occupational therapists and autism and behaviour specialists to ensure that individual pupil's PLP (Personal Learning Plan) targets are fully integrated.

The Curriculum, Teaching and Learning:

The framework identifies seven areas of learning and development, all of which are important and interconnected. The 3 prime areas are:

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

As children grow and develop, the Prime Areas enable them to develop skills in four Specific Areas.

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

Staff working in our Early Years class support learning with these seven areas in mind and consider each child's unique needs, interests and stage of development when planning activities. Teaching and learning is delivered in a cross curricular way, i.e. planned activities often cover more than one area of learning. Because of the nature of our setting, a range of specialist pedagogy is used to support receptive understanding, expressive communication and attention. Approaches including the Eiklan Approach, PECS, Makaton Signing, Intensive Interaction and the VBA approach are used in class and throughout the wider school. Visual and auditory cues are also used to aid smooth transitions between activities and to promote the understanding of routines.

Planning:

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, and guide their development through positive interactions. Staff continually observe the children and record what they're doing, how they're learning most effectively and where to take their learning next. Staff in our Early Years class plan for each child's learning based on their interests and motivators and through on going assessments.

At Hawthorns, learning is linked where possible to a theme, which is changed on a half termly basis, reflects the interests of the children and is age appropriate.

The activities are planned with clear learning foci, which aim to develop and consolidate key skills. The acquisition of skills, demonstrate small skill progression and are taken from our EYFS progression of skills document.

Curriculum Approach: Continuous provision:

The environment is arranged to enable learning through play and continuous provision.

We recognise continuous provision as the resources we offer children as part of an enabling environment and the resources that are safe for children to explore independently. It is important to remember that continuous provision is not just provision that is continually accessible; it is also a selection of resources that continue children's learning with or without adult support

We enhance the provision, adding additional resources according to children's interests or to support a theme or topic.

We ensure the provision is evolving, stimulating, creative and engaging.

Adult-initiated and child-initiated learning

Child-initiated play has an important role in children's learning and development, because children explore and learn from their own thoughts and ideas through the freedom and creativity that child-initiated play enables. *First-hand experiences allow children to develop an understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.*

Child-initiated activities are then picked up on and supported by an adult - these are opportunities for 'sustained shared thinking' to take place.

Adult-led activities are based on our own professional understanding of what we should teach our children and what experiences they should have. Through adult-led activities, we introduce children to new ideas, provide opportunities for them to develop their skills and ensure that they experience all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The Curriculum

Each child has a Personalised Learning Plan which maps out children's targets in line with their EHCP outcomes and how the development of these skills will be facilitated by carefully matched provision. Each child also has a wellbeing profile which identifies key supports for each child to promote and maintain positive wellbeing in the areas of Social and emotional, physical and sensory, environmental, educational and communication.

To meet the complex needs of our pupils a range of specialist pedagogy is used to develop engagement, behaviours for learning and skills acquisition

The curriculum will be guided by the **EQUALS scheme of work: My Play and Leisure.**

The scheme outlines learning opportunities, staff's role in enabling learning and what progression might look like in structured play (adult initiated) and free play (child initiated).

Within free play, the levels are:

- Sensorimotor play
- Relational play
- Functional Play
- Symbolic play
- Socio-dramatic play

We recognise that although these levels of play are broadly developmental, they do not automatically relate to either age or cognitive ability levels.

Play, as a fundamental area of learning, is an ideal opportunity to develop skills of social interaction and progressing through the social dimensions of play:

- Solitary
- Parallel
- Shared
- Turn-Taking
- Co-operative

We recognise that although both the levels and social dimensions of play are broadly developmental indicators, they are not linear and progress is not dependent on achievement within the previous level

Subject specific Learning:

Pupils who have been assessed as ready for subject specific learning will be taught 1-1 or in small groups:

- Reading: Following Hawthorns Guided Reading Framework
- Phonics: Following Letters and Sounds Framework
- Maths: Following White Rose Scheme of Work

They will also develop knowledge and skills using a thematic cross curricular approach to learning in

- Science: Following EQUALS SOW
- Foundation subjects: Following the EYFS framework and Hawthorns skills progressions

Communication

For the majority of our EYFS pupils, we recognise that the development of communication and language skills is a primary area of need.

We use a range of teaching strategies and approaches to support this development

These include:

- Intensive Interaction which is a practical approach to teaching communication and social interactions for early learners with a range of difficulties
- Visual Supports- Presenting information in a way that is meaningful to a learner to increase expressive and receptive language and increase independence. These include
 - whole class visual timetable
 - individual pupil timetables/schedules where appropriate
 - use of objects/photographs/pictures/symbols of reference to support transitions
 - Now and then boards
- Communication aids to make communication exchanges with partners which include:
 - PECS
 - Colourful Semantics communication boards
- Attention Autism
 - There is a focus on attention building activities, some of which are based on a program called 'Attention Autism', where the expectation is for the children to watch and observe a highly motivating activity which introduces and promotes language and play skills, turn taking and imitation with objects.
 - Progress is carefully tracked using the Shared Attention Skills progression tracker
 - Elklan Approach: Blank level progression of skills

Additional Approaches to meet pupil's holistic needs:

- Pairing: the process of building rapport and solid relationships through shared positive relationships
- Task Analysis- Breaking down complex skills or behaviours in to smaller steps.
- TEACCH- To support pupils with ASC, the use of structured teaching across the areas of physical structure, visual schedules, work systems and task organisation.
- Sensory Integration- The process through which we support children to recognise and organise information they receive through the seven senses.
 - Access to appropriate sensory resources to support pupil's individual needs
- The Zones of Regulation-a curriculum geared towards helping students gain skills in consciously regulating their actions by increasing control and problem solving abilities.

Assessment

At Hawthorns ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

- Children are baselined and tracked throughout the year and termly to assess them alongside the Early Years Foundation Stage month bands. At the end of the EYFS, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:
 - Meeting expected levels of development
 - Exceeding expected levels or,
 - Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are then shared with parents and/or carers.

- Throughout the year photographs and observations are recorded showing any achievements. Parents can see these whenever they wish.
- Older children who still require an Early Years Curriculum will be assessed using the I can statements on Dashboard (see Assessment Policy for further details).

The Role of Parents

- We believe that all parents are educators, and that all parents have a fundamental role to play in their child's education.
- There are several formal points of contact for the parents of Early Years children-
 - The post-admission review is person centred which will focus on the Aims of Provision according to the child's EHCPlan.
 - Staff will seek to share, acquire and utilise the knowledge which parents have built up about their child. Parent's observations about their child's use of language is one example of ways in which parents can contribute and, in so doing, begin to value their role within the educational process.
 - Personalised Learning Plans which include IEP targets are shared at a termly meeting with parents.
 - An end of year Pupil Centred Review.
- We know that working with a child and his or her parents or carers, together, we can raise the level of parental expectations and thereby enhance the continuity of education, and the pattern of the pupil's behaviour and co-operation, both at home and in class.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

