

The *Active Learning* Trust



HIGHFIELD LITTLEPORT ACADEMY
An Active Learning Trust School



HIGHFIELD ELY ACADEMY
An Active Learning Trust School

HIGHFIELD ACADEMIES

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:	JO ELLINGWORTH

Contents

General Statement.....	3
Areas of Learning and Development.....	3
Principles	4
Learning Through Play	5
Organisation and Management	6
Outdoor Learning.....	6
Assessment.....	6
Home and School Links	7

General Statement

Early Years education is considered to be the essential foundation upon which all children build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of early years education at our school. Early Years education is concerned with the physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and intellectual development of the individual child, with no one area standing in isolation from the others.

“All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years 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 provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Department for Education 2023.

Areas of Learning and Development

Programmes will be developed under the following EYFS headings. They are split into 2 distinct areas.

Prime Areas

They are the first to develop in response to relationships and experiences and move through to support development in all other areas.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

This focuses on children’s learning, how to, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. It covers important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and of others. They should be interpreted in the context of the values agreed by the adult, including the parents, involved with each setting.

- Communication and Language (C&L)

This covers important aspects of language development and provides the foundation of English. Children must be helped to acquire competence in English as soon as possible, making use, where appropriate of their developing understanding and skills in other forms of communication. This focuses on children’s developing competence in speaking and listening.

- Physical development (PD)

This focuses on children’s developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in both indoor and outdoor environments. It includes establishing positive attitudes towards a healthy and active way of life.

Specific Areas

These areas include the essential skills and knowledge. They grow out of the prime areas and provide important contexts for learning.

- Mathematics

This covers important aspects of mathematical understanding and provides the foundation for numeracy. It focuses on achievement through practical activities and on using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas.

- Literacy

This encompasses reading and writing. For children to become effective learners this area of learning complements the Communication and Language strand giving children the functional skills of understanding and communication.

- Understanding the World

This focuses on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world. It provides a foundation for historical, geographical, scientific and technological learning.

- Expressive Arts and Design

This focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways.

Principles

The EYFS is grouped into 4 themes

- A Unique child

At Highfield Academies our ethos is to achieve the best outcomes for every child. This means that much of our curriculum is individualised and tailored to the needs of the pupils. There is a strong emphasis on working towards EHCP targets. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of the individual. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with a wide range of special educational needs and children from all social and cultural backgrounds. Access to therapies is also available for pupils who require them. These include SALT, OT, Physiotherapy, Play therapy and Music Therapy.

- Positive Relationships

We endeavour to build a strong partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement. Both Green and Blue pathways have a strong focus on the My Play area of learning this encourages and teaches explicitly pupils to build positive relationships.

- Enabling Environment

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. Activities will take place in the classroom, within the wider school environment and in the general locality. We provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued. We aim to support learning with appropriate and

accessible indoor and outdoor spaces, facilities and equipment. The Early Years Department has its own toilets and laundry area. There is a room for developing sensory awareness and a soft play room. The Early Years outdoor space provides an attractive and safe area where children can develop their play skills and learning. There is a secured covered area outside to facilitate learning and play continuously both outside and in.

- Learning and Development – In different ways and at different rates

We will provide children with the opportunity to take part in carefully planned curriculum activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. We will provide a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively. There will be a very strong emphasis on developing children's communication skills. In order to help this Makaton signs and symbols will be used along with PECS where appropriate, to support speech and communication. We have a Communication TA who liaises with the SaLT team to support students with an identified SaLT need. To aid the learning of some children a TEACCH approach is adopted, this will clearly identify the structure of the day.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. For children who attend Highfield Academies we recognise that due to their additional needs our learners may be within the early stage of development in these areas. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **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

Learning Through Play

At Highfield Academies we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. Within both the Green and Blue pathways, we also come together at least for part of the day for class based or group learning which focuses on key skills and knowledge. We also ensure that all teaching is linked to our project based approach to learning where at all possible in order for students to learn in context.

Organisation and Management

Pupils learning at Highfield is organised into three pathways (see Curriculum Policy). The curriculum that pupils across the school encounter is based on their learning style and level of need. Students learning progresses developmentally within the Early Years and progress is measured according to the Birth to Five framework.(Highfield Ely) and EQUALS skills maps (Highfield Littleport.) The exact class pupils will be in is decided based on the professional opinions of the Leadership Team and teachers working with the individual through thorough assessments.

Outdoor Learning

At Highfield we recognise that outdoor learning is an essential part of the Early Years curriculum. We aim to provide the pupils with as many outdoor learning opportunities as possible, both within the school grounds and the wider community. Students also have the opportunity while at Highfield to take part in many outdoor learning opportunities.

Child Initiated and Explorative Learning

As pupils develop they will begin to access activities with increasing independence. Once taught skills, pupils have opportunities to reinforce and practice what they have learnt. Pupils have increasingly complex needs and frequent opportunities to engage in independent, child initiated learning as they progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Assessment

At Highfield Academies, we assess EYFS pupils against both their EHCP targets and the Birth to Five EYFS Framework (Highfield Ely) and EQUALS skills maps (Highfield Littleport).

Upon entry a statutory requirement for all pupils entering Reception is completion of the Reception Baseline Assessment. This will be conducted within the first 6 weeks of the Autumn Term and reported to the Local Authority.

The App Evidence for Learning is used to record and present assessment evidence and judgements this is predominantly in photo and video form. We also track and record evidence of demonstrating the Characteristics of Effective Learning so that we can look at the ways in which students learn best. This information is then used to plan stimulating and engaging activities within their learning style to maximise progress.

The judgements are then moderated by teachers from both schools. There are also half termly pupil progress meetings with Department Leaders and Head of School where individual pupils are discussed in more detail.

We are required to complete an EYFS Profile assessment which is submitted to the local authority at the end of each child's reception year. The school will provide a written report to parents summarising each child's EYFS Profile results, and parents will be given the opportunity to discuss with their child's class teacher.

Home and School Links

At Highfield Academies we strive to have strong, positive and transparent relationships with parents and carers.

Evidence for Learning is a parent tool that enables parents to see the evidence of progress in real time. Each parent/carer is given the opportunity to sign up for this. Parents are encouraged to contribute evidence of learning that has taken place at home as we recognise that some pupils do not generalise skills across different environments.

Class Dojo is used on a daily basis to communicate with Parents/Carers. This includes sharing images and video.

During parent evenings and annual review, a more formalised report is prepared, again using Evidence for Learning. This is shared as a way of demonstrating pupil progress against EHCP outcomes, curriculum targets and the Characteristics of Effective Learning.