

**St Hilary School**

**Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

“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 live 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 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, most children join us, full time at the start of the academic year, during which he/she turns five.

“The EYFS sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships

Enabling Environments

Learning and Development

**A Unique Child**

At St. Hilary Primary School, we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions towards learning are greatly influenced by feedback from others; we use praise, humour and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive and forward-thinking attitude to learning.

*Inclusion*

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of ‘differences’. All children at St. Hilary Primary School are treated fairly, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion or academic abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

Within our school we believe that all of our children matter and we encourage them to be ‘the best they can be’. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by listening to our children and taking account of their range of life experience when planning for their learning.

Throughout 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.

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 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.

It is important to us that all children in the school are ‘safe’. We aim to educate children with knowledge and understanding of boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist.

We provide children with choices to help them develop important life-skills. 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 well-being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy) se

**Promoting British Values in the Early years.**

**“Democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.”**

For children in the Early Years this is about having choices and making decisions. It is allowing younger children to express their views and choose ways to learn and take ownership of their learning environment.

Learning to distinguish from right and wrong and understanding the boundaries within a setting is fundamentally important. Realising that codes of behaviour are defined by a consensus of accepted rules is discussed from the very first days in the reception class. Talking about what makes a happy classroom where everyone is considerate and works together as a team is very important.

The emphasis on a unique child and its relation to individual liberty focuses on self -confidence and self –awareness. Links to the Characteristics of Effective Learning and understanding *how* childrenlearn is key as each child learns in different ways and at different rates. Child-initiated learning allows freedom of choice, risk taking, critical thinking and open ended discovery which challenges and motivates young minds.

In the Early Years we promote mutual respect and tolerance by teaching young children to treat others as they would want to be treated. Sharing, turn taking, co-operating and respecting other’s opinions is a routine aspect of the Reception Class. Engaging with the wider community and appreciating their own and other cultures is part of ‘Understanding the World’ and ‘People and Communities’

Through stories, resources and activities our staff encourage children to reflect upon similarities and differences between families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions. We challenge stereotypes and appreciate the talents and abilities that everyone has to offer.

*Welfare SAFEGUARDING*

“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 St. Hilary Primary School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014 , Early Years Inspection Handbook September 2015 and from July 2015 The Prevent Duty came into force.

We understand that we are required to:

**Protect children from extremism and radicalisation**

**(see whole school safeguarding policy)**

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. (DBS check)

Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is 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. (See whole school policies)

We endeavour to meet all of these requirements.

**Positive Relationships**

At St. Hilary Primary School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

*Parents as Partners*

We recognise that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we greatly value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

Talking to parents about their child before their starting at St. Hilary;

Asking parents to complete an in-depth questionnaire about their child (including information about their home-life, attitudes, current successes in the 6 areas of learning, etc.)

Giving children the opportunity to spend time in their future classroom during the July before starting school in September;

‘Stay and Play’ sessions are arranged for children to attend (with their parents) in the last few weeks of the Summer Term.

Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;

Encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher if there are any concerns.

Each child has a personal on-line learning journey whereby we records observations that are shared with parents. ‘Tapestry’ allows parents to comment and upload photos of WOW moments from home.

There is a further induction meeting in September, where more information is given about the class routines.

Parents have an opportunity to discuss their child’s progress in-depth, during the Autumn and Summer terms.

Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of the Foundation Stage and can log in to the school’s tracking system SPTO through the year to see their child’s progress.

( See EYFS Policy – Parental Involvement for more information)

All staff at St. Hilary Primary School, including those involved within the EYFS, aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. At our school, the EYFS teachers act as a ‘Key Person’ to all EYFS children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

Staff in the EYFS have a strong relationship with the nearby Sunny Corner Pre-School, and the EYFS Leader is part of the committee. The EYFS teachers meet with staff from a range of preschools at the end of each academic year to discuss transferring children. The EYFS teachers also take part in any TAC or SEN meetings during the Summer Term previous to the children starting at St. Hilary.

**Enabling Environments**

At St. Hilary Primary School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. Through observation, we assess the children’s interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children’s learning.

*Observation, Assessment and Planning*

Planning within the EYFS classrooms is based around half-termly themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning, however, the teacher may alter these in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning.

We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways and used to inform the EYFSP.

(see EYFS Assessment Schedule – found in the whole-school Assessment Policy)

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the 17 ELGs and commenting on the characteristics of learning.

The parents are given the opportunity to discuss these judgements in the Summer Term progress meeting with the teacher, and both parents and children are encouraged to complete a feedback sheet.

*The Learning Environment*

The EYFS classrooms and the outdoor classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The unit is mainly set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The outdoor classroom has a small under-cover area, and a large decked area. This has a positive effect on the children’s development. Being outdoors offers the children further opportunities to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

**Learning and Development ‘Characteristics Of Learning’**

At St. Hilary Primary School we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and have their own learning styles. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are often linked.

*Teaching and Learning Style*

Our Teaching and Learning Policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the EYFS just as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 2. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

The partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;

The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;

The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;

The carefully-planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS;

The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;

The encouragement of children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence;

The support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;

The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations;

The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

*Playing and exploring*

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children, as well as individually. The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They have the opportunity to express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

*Active Learning*

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 satisfactions as they take ownership of their learning.

*Creativity and Critical Thinking*

Children should be given opportunities 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 (within reason) to extend their learning. Adults are encouraged to consider when to, and when not to interject in a child’s play.

**Areas of Learning**

The EYFS is based upon:

Three ***PRIM***E areas of learning:

* Communication and language
* Physical development
* Personal, social and emotional development

Four ***SPECIFIC*** areas of learning:

* Literacy
* Mathematics
* Understanding the world
* Expressive arts and design

Observations and assessments also focus on three ***characteristics of effective learning:***

* Playing and exploring- engagement
* Active learning- motivation
* Creating and thinking critically- thinking

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

*Monitoring and review*

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. This governor has the opportunity to discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners and provide feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.

The Head teacher and Subject Leaders carry out monitoring of the EYFS through observation and discussion as part of the whole-school monitoring schedule.

Reviewed by: Teaching and Learning Committee

Date reviewed:

Signed by Headteacher: K Butcher

Date:

Signed by Chair of governors: Mr P Scrase

Date:

To be reviewed: Summer 2016

*N.B. All quotations included in this document are taken from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2014*