

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy

Halton Community Combined School



Together, our **community** inspires a love of learning and enables children to find their voice.

Adopted by Full Governing Body

September 2024

Date of Next Review

September 2025

1. Aims

- To develop a love of reading
- To acquire the skills to enjoy writing independently
- To master the fundamental 'building blocks' in mathematics
- To be ready to operate in the digital world
- To leave Halton School having 'found their voice'

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) that applies from September 2021](#).

3. Principles of Early Years Education

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is the period of education from birth to five, to the end of the reception year. It is a distinct and important stage because it gives children secure foundations for later learning.
- Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn and the role of the adult is crucial in this process. Practitioners at Halton Community Combined School plan and resource a challenging environment in which children's play can be supported and extended.
- Young children are naturally curious and actively learn through play. In their play children use the experiences they have and extend them to build up ideas, concepts and skills. While playing, children can try things out, solve problems, and be creative. They can take risks and use trial and error to find things out.
- Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. Children rapidly develop their physical, intellectual, social and emotional skills during the early years. They are entitled to provisions which support and extend knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence and help them to overcome any disadvantage.
- Early years' experience should build on what children already know and can do. It should also encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn and aim to give protection from early failure.
- No child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of his or her race, culture or religion, home language background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.
- Four guiding principles shape practice in early years' settings. These are:
 - 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 with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** The framework covers the education and care of all the children in early years' provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

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3. Teaching and Learning

Halton Community Combined School has a purpose built Pre-school (Poppies) accommodating up to 16 pupils per session. The Pre-school team consists of a Pre-school Manager who implements the day to day running of the nursery, and an early years teaching assistant. Each child is allocated a key worker who will liaise with parents and other staff to support each child's learning. The summer term intake will increase to 20 pupils per session.

There is one Reception class (Bluebells) accommodating up to 30 pupils. The class has 1 teacher (job share) and 2 early years teaching assistants.

Both Preschool and Reception plan together to create a curriculum that gives children opportunities to make decisions and choices in their learning.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. 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. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

Communication and Language development underpins all seven areas of learning. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Physical Development is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practise of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

Literacy is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive arts and design The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

The **Characteristics of Effective 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.

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4.1 Planning

Practitioners plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Practitioners also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

5. Assessment

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. On-going assessment (formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations.

Staff are able to share with parents and colleagues all aspects of a child's development. We do this by:

- Observing, listening, interacting and talking.
- Baseline Assessment on entry (September) and exit (June).
- Collecting information from parents and other adults.
- Recording children's development in all areas of the curriculum.
- Reporting to parents.
- Sending transitional information to the next year group.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP).

The level of progress children are expected to have attained by the end of the EYFS is defined by the Early Learning Goals. In the final term of their Reception year the EYFS profile is completed for each child. The profile provides parent/carers and staff with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels and their readiness for Year 1.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or they are not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging').

The EYFSP, as well as a short commentary on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning, is reported to parents and the Year 1 teachers at the end of the school year.

6. Working with parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

- Parents are encouraged to take an active part in their child's education. In the summer before their child is due to start in Preschool or Reception there is a parent's meeting to introduce the staff, explain the curriculum, the structure of the school day and any other information parents may need.
- There is a home-school diary which allows parents and teachers to communicate daily.
- We use an online learning platform called Seesaw to provide regular updates on the early years curriculum and ideas to support the children at home. Parents can also provide evidence of their child's progress at home.

- Parents are always welcome to make appointments to see their class teacher in addition to the two parents evening per school year.
- Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development.

7. Admissions

- Admission to Preschool is managed by the school with details of how to apply available on our website. We welcome parents and children to visit the school before they apply.
- Admission to Reception is administered by the Local Authority. We welcome parents and children to visit the school before they apply.
- At Halton Community Combined School, we stagger the intake of both Reception and Nursery children over a short period to ensure a smooth start to their school life.
- Admission to Preschool does not guarantee admission to Halton Community Combined School.

8. Equal Opportunities

At Halton Community Combined School, we believe that the equality of opportunity is important for all pupils irrespective of gender, ethnicity, social circumstances, religion or belief and intellectual capacity. Within the Early Years we strive to reflect and respect this diversity in our choice of resources and in the model we set for children. We aim to plan an environment for a child that is free from stereotypical images and discriminatory practices. In this way and through appropriate differentiation we try to meet the needs of all

9. Special Needs

- In accordance with the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs the school has policies in place for the identification, assessment and provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
- Pupil progress is reviewed by all Early Years staff, the SENCO and the Headteacher. Parents are consulted and involved at all stages.
- Outside agencies and support services are involved if the SENCO has any further concerns
- SSP's are written and updated three times throughout the year.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved every three years by the EYFS lead, Senior Leadership Team and then shared with governing body Teaching and Learning Committee.