



3.2 Policy for Early Years Foundation Stage

Reviewed by: **SK**
LG
Date of last review: **09/22**

Head of Lower School
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Date of next review: **09/23**

POLICY FOR THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

This EYFS Policy is in accordance with the Statutory Framework for Early Years, 2021, giving a view of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision at Notting Hill Preparatory School.

“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 Early Years Foundation Stage (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 children’s ‘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”

(Paragraphs 1 and 2 of The Statutory Framework for the EYFS, 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. Whilst we are exempt from the Learning, Development and Assessment requirements of Statutory Framework for Early Years, 2021, the EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child Positive

Relationships Enabling

Environments

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

A Unique child

At Notting Hill Prep 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 to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive 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 Notting Hill Prep School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are equally valued.

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. 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;

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- 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, liaising closely with Learning Support Department (see **Learning Support** and **EAL** Policies).

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. Our **Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection** (which follows statutory guidance from **Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2021, to the Prevent guidance and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018**) and related policies (**Anti-bullying, Health and Safety, Educational Visits, Pastoral Care**) cover all aspects of our care for the children in our charge, including details for the following points:

- There is always a member of staff on site with a Paediatric First Aid certificate
- At NHP it is expected that parents will have trained their child to be clean and dry before they start in Reception. However, accidents do happen and there are some circumstances where a child may require help with toileting from staff in school. (For guidance for staff on intimate care surrounding toileting, see relevant 'intimate care' section in **Policy for Safeguarding and Child Protection**).
- Parents and carers visiting are made aware that the use of any personal camera device is disallowed within the Early Years setting and classrooms. Notices to this effect are displayed in the Reception classrooms. Parents are discouraged from using personal devices to record/photograph school events, such as Nativity performances, and are reminded that if they do so, the images are to remain within their family and not to be shared on social media. All performances and events are photographed by designated staff on school devices and these photos can be viewed securely by parents on the school intranet or in the school newsletters.
- Any parent volunteers must undertake a safeguarding induction and sign a risk assessment and confidentiality form before they can begin
- All staff who work with, or come into contact with children in the Early Years have to sign a staff suitability self-declaration form
- Volunteers and visitors must sign in, wear a visitor's lanyard or sticker and be supervised by a member of staff at all times
- NHP has a safeguarding governor, and also a dedicated Early Years governor

Welfare

"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 Notting Hill Prep we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. 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
- Promote good health, including oral health
- manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs (See **Behaviour Policy**)
- 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

We endeavour to meet all these requirements.

Positive Relationships

At Notting Hill Prep 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 value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and will play, in educating their children. We do this by:

- communicating with parents about their child before he/she starts in the September term
- providing the parents with a 'settling-in guide' including information on how to prepare their child for school and information on life in Reception
- giving children the opportunity both to spend time with their new teacher during the summer term before starting school and to get to know their new class mates at the New Reception Teddy Bears' Picnic
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting/presentation at the start of the Autumn term
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress
- encouraging parents to talk to their child's teacher if there are any concerns. There are formal meetings for parents in the Autumn and Spring terms at which the teacher and parents discuss the child's progress. These are confidential meetings. Parents receive a report on their child's Early Learning Goals, characteristics of learning and progress at the end of the Autumn term and a full report at the end of the Summer term
- organising a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: share days, parent speakers, class assemblies, Sports Day, etc

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school, the EYFS Form Teacher acts as 'Key Person' to all children in EYFS, supported by the Teaching Assistant in each class.

Pre-Schools as Partners

At Notting Hill Prep, we recognise that it is extremely important to build relationships with local Pre-Schools and nurseries. Having strong relations with these settings provides an opportunity to help children ease through the transitioning process. We have introduced a system whereby the NHP Teaching Assistants may swap settings with Acorn Nursery practitioners if they wish. This helps the nursery practitioners better understand NHP's expectations and vision for learning. Similarly, we also encourage visits from other pre-school/nursery practitioners to our Reception classes to share information and offer suggestions to support the smooth transition of the children.

The EYFS staff also visit and liaise with pre-school staff to talk about individual children and their needs. Nursery staff have a wealth of knowledge about their children which is key to them settling quickly and securely into their new school lives at NHP. Head of Early Years and Head of Lower School attend Early Years Leadership Network meetings; made up of nursery head teachers and playgroup leaders. They share quality provision and best practice.

Enabling Environments

At Notting Hill Prep, 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.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Medium Term Plans (MTPs) schedule, which is based around learning themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning. However, the MTP's may be altered in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on weekly planning. Regular assessments are made of the children's learning and this information is used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the EYFS includes observation, which involves the Form Teacher and other adults as appropriate. Each child's level of development is recorded against the prime and specific areas of learning and development derived from the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as well as observations of the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The Form Teachers work closely with Year 1 teachers to ensure children who are 'exceeding' in the areas of learning are challenged and stretched using Key Stage One curricular opportunities.

At the end of the final term of the EYFS, we provide a full report to parents, reporting their progress against The Characteristics of Learning and giving individual, personalised targets under the title 'Next Steps'. Opportunities are given for parents to discuss these judgements with their Form Teacher, the Head of Early Years or the Head of Lower School.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, or be quiet and rest. Where possible, the classroom is set up in learning areas, for children to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have their own enclosed outdoor area and access to the front and Newton Centre play area. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than can be achieved indoors. It allows children to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning and

characteristics of effective learning. The children also engage in Forest School which takes place in both our own bespoke Woodland area or off site, in Holland Park or Hampstead Heath, which further encourages exploration and play in an outside environment.

The EYFS Timetable

At NHP, the EYFS timetable is more flexible than those in other year groups. At various times, a free-flow approach means that there are a range of activities set up to incorporate a variety of learning intentions. The majority of these will be child-initiated and some will be adult-led in groups, individually or as a whole class. There are timetabled 'lessons' which take place with the form teacher or a specialist teacher, for example Music or PE. Maths is taught every day and the daily phonics sessions are taught in ability groups using the RWI programme. This programme is continued in Year 1.

The children are all working towards the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and activities are planned which allow children to develop all the *Characteristics of Learning*.

At NHP, we recognise the importance of learning through play in the EYFS. We believe that a good free play environment offers a rich learning experience for children. It allows each child to progress at his/her own pace, it gives children practice in choosing, and in dealing with, the consequences of choice, and it encourages a more flexible and open-ended use of the resources.

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

At Notting Hill Prep, 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 inter-connected.

In August 2021, NHP applied to opt out of the learning and development requirements of the Government's EYFS framework. We believe that it is a matter of choice for independent schools to decide how they wish to approach teaching and learning. Independent schools are already exempt from following the National Curriculum from Year 1 onwards, and recent changes to the law meant that it was possible to apply for an exemption for three to five year olds. NHP followed the protocol of informing parents and the local authority. The exemption took effect from 12 August 2021.

The exemption frees the school up from time-consuming bureaucracy and allows teachers the freedom to exercise their professional judgement in implementing a curriculum and teaching learning strategies that are best suited to the children at NHP.

In acknowledgement of the fact that children develop at different rates, we ease children into the new routine and environment at the beginning of the school year by starting with half-days for the first two weeks of term. In the first term, children have an optional half-day on Wednesdays. In the Spring and Summer terms, all children are in school for five full days, in order to prepare them for the transition into Year One.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on **Teaching and Learning** defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to the EYFS as they do to teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn 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. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

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-ended questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of seven areas of learning:

The Prime Areas:

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

The Specific Areas:

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

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 (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The members of Senior Management, Head of Early Years and the Head of Lower School will carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule (see **Monitoring Policy**), as

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well as regular monitoring of planning and delivery of lessons, ensuring that all areas of the curriculum are covered.

The EYFS are involved in regular Lower School moderation meetings to monitor the work produced and measure children's progress against their cohort, as well as against the upcoming expectations for the year.