Hurst Green Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy (EYFS)

Policy for the attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team	√		
Teachers	√		
Teaching Assistants	√		
Administrative Staff		√	
Lunchtime Supervisors		√	
Site Manager		√	
Cleaners		√	
Governors	√		
Parents	√		
Website	√		
Local Authority		√	

Review frequency	Annually
Created	March 2022
Previous versions	21/03/2022 Full Governors; 27/11/2023 Full Governors; 10/02/2025; 17/03/2026
This version agreed	12/10/2026
Next review date	Autumn Term 2027

Rationale

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to reach their full potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances.'

(Statutory Framework for The Early Years Foundation Stage)

The reception year is a very exciting time for both parents and children. Throughout the year, we work closely together to ensure that the children develop a love for learning which they will carry with them for the rest of their school journey. At Hurst Green, we greatly value the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We provide a nurturing and exciting learning environment to give all our children the opportunity to grow and develop into happy and confident learners. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Our Core Purpose

At Hurst Green Primary School, we are driven by a steadfast commitment to empowering every child to reach their full potential. Guided by our core values of **respect, compassion, equity, aspiration, collaboration** and **responsibility**, we strive to create a nurturing, inclusive, and inspiring environment where our children can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. Our curriculum enables as many pupils as possible to achieve a Good Level of Development by the end of their time in Reception and we then build on this in subsequent years.

Principles

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy is directly related to our whole school ethos, vision and values. It outlines the additional goals and strategies we implement to address the four overarching principles of the EYFS.

- 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 develop and learn at different rates. We provide a happy, safe, secure and stimulating and challenging program of **learning and development.** Our practice is informed by the EYFS Framework and covers all areas of learning and aims to meet the needs of all children, including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Effective Practice in relation to each of the four overarching principles of EYFS and the characteristics of effective teaching and learning is detailed in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage using the link below.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf

Quality First Teaching (QFT) in EYFS

At Hurst Green Primary School, high-quality teaching in the Early Years is underpinned by Quality First Teaching (QFT), in line with the whole-school approach, ensuring consistency, high expectations and strong outcomes for all pupils. This ensures that all children, including vulnerable learners and those with additional needs, can access an ambitious, well-sequenced curriculum and make strong progress from their starting points.

Quality First Teaching in EYFS is built around five key principles:

- **Clarity of Learning**
  Learning is carefully sequenced and builds on prior knowledge. Practitioners ensure that children understand what they are learning through clear routines, purposeful play experiences and well-planned adult interactions.

- **Strong Explanation and Modelling**
  Adults model language, thinking and learning behaviours through high-quality interactions, sustained shared thinking and explicit demonstration. Vocabulary is carefully introduced and revisited to support children's communication and understanding.

- **Deliberate Practice**
  Children are provided with repeated opportunities to practise and embed key skills through both adult-led and child-initiated learning. Practitioners support children through guided practice before promoting increasing independence.

- **Responsive Teaching**
  Practitioners continuously assess children's understanding through observation and interaction. Activities, questioning and support are adapted in the moment to address misconceptions and extend learning.

- **Inclusion by Design**
  Learning experiences are designed so that all children can access the same ambitious curriculum. Scaffolds and adaptations support independence rather than reliance on adults.

A key focus of Quality First Teaching is the experience of vulnerable learners**,** including pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those with gaps in learning. When teaching is effective for these pupils, it is effective for all.

Learning and Development

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the statutory framework. There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in early years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. Children require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS and prepare them for their next steps in learning.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The three prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** – Listening, attention and understanding – Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Gross motor skills – Fine motor skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self-regulation - Managing self - Building relationships

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas of learning are:

- **Literacy** – Comprehension - Word reading - Writing
- **Mathematics** – Numbers - Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the world** – Past and Present - People, culture and Communities - The natural world
- **Expressive arts and design** – Creating with materials - Being imaginative and Expressive

Quality First Teaching ensures that all areas of learning are delivered in a way that enables children to engage deeply, practise key skills and build secure knowledge over time. Practitioners ensure that opportunities are purposeful, inclusive and appropriately challenging so that all children can participate meaningfully in the curriculum.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. They are a fundamental component of the Early Years Foundation Stage and are crucial in shaping how children learn and engage with the environment.

- **Playing and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy their achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

All of these areas interlink throughout the curriculum and adults make the most of opportunities to interact with children to develop their playing, thinking and learning. Adults also recognise that there are times when they need to take a step back to enable children to think critically and solve a problem by trial and error or perseverance.

These characteristics are supported through high-quality adult interactions, modelling and carefully planned provision, ensuring children are enabled to think, explore and develop independence through appropriate scaffolding.

The Learning Environment

The reception unit is a two-form entry, open-plan space designed to allow children to explore and learn safely across both classrooms. The classrooms are organised with areas of Continuous Provision that encourage children to take ownership of their learning and develop independence. Specific areas are set up for active play, quiet time, and creative activities. Children have access to both indoor and outdoor spaces throughout the day, which positively impacts their development. The Foundation Stage includes its own outdoor classroom, play area with a trim trail, small field, and mud kitchen, along with a Forest area that the children visit weekly. The outdoor environment offers opportunities for exploration, sensory experiences, and physical activity on a larger scale than indoors. All areas of the curriculum can be explored throughout, allowing children to engage in hands-on, dynamic learning experiences.

Play in the Early Years

In our setting, we place a strong emphasis on the importance of play as a vital tool for learning and development in the early years. We believe that play is not only enjoyable but also an essential part of how young children develop their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills. Our environment is designed to be rich in opportunities for both structured and free play, allowing children to explore, create, and problem-solve in ways that are meaningful to them. Through a combination of indoor and outdoor play spaces, sensory activities, role-play, and collaborative games, we support children in building confidence, resilience, and independence. Educators actively engage with children during play, guiding, scaffolding, and extending learning while ensuring that every child's interests and individual needs are met. By embedding play into our daily routines, we foster a love of learning and create an inclusive, nurturing environment where children feel valued and empowered to thrive.

Planning

Our teachers work collaboratively to plan activities and 'real life' experiences that help children develop and learn effectively, allowing children to make decisions, work independently or in groups, and explore their learning environment. The curriculum is structured around Continuous Provision areas, enriched with mini topics, and linked to all seven areas of learning, with a strong emphasis on the development of language and communication. At Hurst Green, we use key texts to inspire learning and introduce new vocabulary using quality books.

The experiences we provide often allow children to develop a range of skills, competencies, and concepts across multiple learning areas. We believe no area of learning should be isolated, as they are all interdependent and work together to support a well-rounded approach to each child's development.

Staff also consider each child's individual needs, interests, and developmental stage when planning activities, ensuring they are both challenging and enjoyable. For children with special educational needs or disabilities, we assess whether specialist support is necessary and collaborate with relevant agencies when needed.

As we guide and plan children's activities, we reflect on the various ways children learn, building on their previous experiences whilst preparing them for the next steps in their education, particularly for Year 1. We also use the Little Wandle program to structure our daily phonics lessons and White Rose to support our Mathematics planning.

Planning is informed by Quality First Teaching principles, ensuring clear learning intentions, opportunities for modelling, and carefully planned guided practice. Practitioners use ongoing assessment to adapt provision and teaching so that all children, particularly vulnerable learners, can access and succeed in learning.

Assessment

At Hurst Green Primary, assessment is an ongoing process that takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities that are an integral part of the learning and development process. Assessment is completed regularly and involves all members of staff working collaboratively. It is used to inform responsive teaching, enabling practitioners to identify misconceptions, adapt teaching and provide timely support. This ensures that all children continue to access appropriately challenging learning and make sustained progress over time.

During the first term in Reception, teachers carry out the National Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Alongside this statutory assessment, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using ongoing observations. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching program for individuals and groups of children.

We use the Tapestry app to record observations and assessments of children's achievements, interests and needs. These observations may include photographs or pieces of work that capture key moments of progress and engagement. The app serves as a two-way communication tool, allowing parents to access these observations. Parents are also encouraged to contribute by sharing learning or achievements from home.

Progress is tracked using Insight, in line with whole-school assessment systems. This allows staff to monitor attainment and progress over time, identify trends across the cohort and ensure continuity of learning into Key Stage 1. Practitioners use Development Matters and guidance from the DfE Early Years Foundation Stage Framework to support accurate assessment and professional judgement. Information gathered through ongoing observation feeds into Insight, supporting planning and next steps for individual children. This information is shared with parents during consultation meetings and in end-of-year reports, and is passed on to the next teacher to ensure effective transition and continuity of learning.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the Statutory Framework for the Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging or Expected.

Parents receive an annual report that informs them whether their child is at the expected level of learning at the end of the year or emerging. The reports also highlight the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in June, and send them to parents in early July each year.

Working with Parents/carers

We recognise the important role that parents/carers play in their children's learning journey and understand that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents/carers. We aim to involve families as much as possible in school life. We seek to start building relationships with parents from the term before their child starts school and maintain it throughout the child's entire time at school. We do this in a range of different ways in reception, which include:

- Introductory sessions
- Stay and play
- Regular EYFS and whole school newsletters
- Inviting parents to attend informal meetings about areas of the curriculum, such as phonics or reading.
- Parent consultations and drop in sessions
- Informative website and class pages
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as workshops, Christmas productions, sports day and assemblies
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through Tapestry, reading diaries and school newsletters.
- Regularly sharing children's progress and valuing the on-going contributions to this from parents/carers

Transition

We recognise that starting school is a significant step for both children and their families, and we are committed to supporting this process with care and understanding. We plan this time carefully to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child so that they settle into their new class quickly and happily. To help ease the transition, we offer a range of opportunities for children and parents to become familiar with the environment, staff and routines. We do this through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open days and induction meetings.
- Inviting children into school in the summer term before they start school to stay and play, with and without their parent/carer, to explore the environment and meet their new teachers.
- Providing a handbook of information about starting school at Hurst Green.

- Inviting parents to our induction meeting with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Arranging, where possible, visits by the teacher to all children in their childcare provision prior to their starting school.
- Arranging further school visits and meetings for children who may be vulnerable or have additional needs
- Maintaining an up-to-date website

At the start of the term in September, children will continue their transition for the first few days with a staggered start to help them settle comfortably, before beginning full-time attendance the following week. Our goal is to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere where children feel safe, valued and ready to thrive in their new learning environment.

Safeguarding & Welfare

At Hurst Green Primary School, our children's safeguarding and welfare are our top priorities. We provide a secure environment supported by robust policies, procedures, and documentation. We teach children how to stay safe, make informed choices, and assess risks. All safeguarding and child protection policies within the school are applicable to children in the EYFS, so far as they are relevant to their age and developmental stage.

We comply with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2025) and meet the associated regulatory requirements for Safeguarding and Welfare to:

- Promote the welfare of children
- Promote good health, including oral health
- Prevent 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
- Ensure that we maintain the correct pupil to adult ratios and that all staff are suitably qualified
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe, efficient management of the school and to meet the needs of the children

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in Reception to follow the principles stated in this policy. The SLT and EYFS Lead Teacher will carry out monitoring on EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Monitoring of EYFS provision includes a focus on the consistent implementation of Quality First Teaching. This includes reviewing the experience of all pupils, particularly vulnerable learners, through activities such as learning walks, pupil voice, work scrutiny and observations of provision.

Monitoring identifies:

- what is working well
- what needs strengthening
- actions required to improve practice
- and the impact of these actions over time

This ensures continuous improvement and high-quality provision for all children.

This policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information, please review the school's data protection policy published on the school's website.

Updated by S. Yeomans Early Years Lead Teacher May 2026