



Hampden Gurney

Church of England Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Our Vision and Values

*“Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find;
knock and the door will be opened to you.”
Matthew 7:7*

Our school vision is deeply rooted in the theology and Biblical teachings of Matthew 7:7 which speaks of the importance of prayer as a way of developing an enriched life and personal relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

At the heart of our school community is a commitment to prayer and worship. Our curriculum provides children with a thirst for knowledge and wisdom, a high level of challenge and a deep understanding that we are all equal and made in the image of God. Our relationships with each other, our local community and global companions leads us to want to care and serve others.

Our vision is lived out through our Christian values of:

- Reverence
- Thankfulness
- Humility
- Forgiveness
- Resilience
- Peace

Our Aim

At Hampden Gurney, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the unique child and work alongside parents and others partners to meet individual needs in order the children make good progress. We offer equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice to ensure that every child is included and supported.

Statutory Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Hampden Gurney, most children join us from age three up to rising five when they then move onto Year one. The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child + Positive Relationships + Enabling Environments = Learning and Development

Unique child

At Hampden Gurney, 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 and have their own interests. Children's attitudes to learning is influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing circle times/assemblies and reward stickers, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued at Hampden Gurney. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs are identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and the school's SENCo is called upon for further information and advice.

In the EYFS, we set individual, 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.

Staff ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. They will be encouraged to respect similarities and differences within cultures other than their own. The school seeks to develop tolerance and concern for others.

Welfare and Safety

At Hampden Gurney, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding 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.
- 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 and efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At Hampden Gurney, 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.

Partnership with Parents and Carers:

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value greatly the contribution that parents make. We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We do this through:

1. Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our Nursery by doing home visits;
2. **Coffee morning that takes place in the school's hall get parents and carers together to socialise and feel included in the life of the school.**
3. Offering parents regular termly opportunities to talk about their child's progress and providing opportunities look through their child's special profile;
4. Encouraging parents to talk to their child's teachers about any concerns they may have;
5. Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents (fundraising days like Walkathon, Jeans for Genes day and World Book day, celebration of special days, such as Mother's Day afternoon tea and Father's Day picnic, Christmas Concert, International Food Day, etc.) to which all family members are invited.
6. Encouraging parents to engage in a weekly library rota and specific dates where parents come to school in order to share creative Art activities, talk about jobs and countries.
7. Completing two formal meetings per year (Autumn and Spring term) at which time the teacher and parent are able to discuss pupil progress and development.
8. Ensuring that parents are well-informed about the curriculum their child is experiencing through Tapestry, notes, letters, newsletters, and notice boards and taking opportunities at the end of the day to talk to parents about significant achievements or any concerns.
9. Inviting parents to attend workshops that help support their child's development at home.
10. Actively welcoming and encouraging parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Other Partners and Community

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times, we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on visits and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders.

Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. We talk to parents about their child before their child starts in our school by doing home visits. In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1.

A Class swap day takes place in July and children have the opportunity to meet their new teacher, talk about the expectations and routines of the new classroom. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Enabling Environments

At Hampden Gurney, 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.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, creative and explore as well as be quiet and rest. The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

We offer stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities. We provide children with rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching. We support children to take risks and explore the world around them. Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively

and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further develop individual learning.

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, creative and explore as well as be quiet and rest. The environment is set up providing opportunities across all seven areas of learning in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Reception has an outdoor play deck area connected to the classes by a set of stairs. Nursery is separated from the play deck by a corridor. **The outdoor area is equal to indoors, as outdoor play is central to young children's learning. The outdoor classroom offers children the opportunity to utilise effective modes of learning – play, movement and sensory experience.**

In addition, the EYFS classes makes use of the roof garden and the science lab for projects like planting, searching for minibeasts etc. This has a positive effect on the children's development, offering opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales; opportunity for children to explore, use their senses and be physically active. The children also have access to the school library and ICT suite once a week.

Planning

The Planning within the EYFS follows the schools' Curriculum Map and the Medium Term Plan alongside Short Term (weekly planning), which is based around the individual children's needs and interests.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, Early Years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further and develop their language skills for communicating.

During child-initiated activities, the adults' role is to show an interest in the children's ideas, build conversation, facilitate and share ideas and model different skills. Such interaction with the children is essential as this helps to build the children's understanding and therefore guides new learning. This is then re-fed back into the planning in order to ensure that the topics being covered reflect the children's fascinations currently within the class.

By being fluid in this way current topics can be readily introduced and adapted. This allows for spontaneity within our Foundation Stage and allows for unexpected occurrences, such as a butterfly and ducklings in class, birthdays, new siblings, to become an integral part of our learning.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting of Progress

At Hampden Gurney, we have high expectations of all children based on accurate assessment of children's skill, knowledge and understanding. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain an understanding of each child's level of understanding. The role of practitioners is to observe the children, assess what they see, plan how to respond and teach next steps immediately in a way that is uniquely suited to that particular child in that particular moment.

Assessment occurs throughout any taught session as well as during free flow times when children are embedding and extending any previous learning. These assessments will then be used to shape and adapt any future learning. A hard copy of Development Matters is kept for each child. This is updated on an 'on entry, half termly and end of year basis'.

Observations are taken using Tapestry App, which allows staff to take photos, videos and to make notes while observing what the children are doing or saying. **Our assessment aims to move children's learning forward and to show how the individuals have moved forward.** From such observations, we can ascertain what the next steps are for the children. We are then able to share these experiences with the children's parents on an almost daily basis. This is a two-way process whereby parents may input observations of their own, add comments to post and like observations they can view. As it is an app based 'Online Learning Journey', it is highly accessible as parents can access on mobile phones, tablets as well as on computers.

On entry to Reception, a NFER baseline assessment is carried out for each child and at the end of each half term, assessments are collated to track how well the children are progressing.

Benchmarking method is used to accurately track and assess pupils' reading progress across the whole school, ensuring consistent and accurate levelling in reading.

Opportunities for a Parent Teacher Consultation are provided in the Autumn and Spring to provide information about children's progress and to discuss the children's learning journey from Tapestry, to talk about children's strengths, achievements, interests and next steps.

These form the basis for the monitoring of pupil progress as the children progress through school. On-going teacher assessments are undertaken in line with the Foundation Stage Profile and these form the basis for the end of year report to parents.

We ensure our end of EYFS assessments are reliable through:

- our knowledge of the child gained through observation and interaction
- our environment enables the child to flourish to their full capacity
- our assessments ensure a range of contributors e.g. parents, the school nurse, Speech and Language Therapy, outreach teachers and other relevant adults
- in-house moderation across the EYFS team
- internal and external moderation with the Local Authority (LA).

Learning and Development

At Hampden Gurney we accept that children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

At Hampden Gurney, staff create learning opportunities around seven areas of learning.

The Prime Areas:

Communication and language: giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, develop their confidence and skill in expressing themselves, and speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development: providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, develop their co-ordination, control, and movement, understand the importance of physical activity, and make healthy choices about food.

Personal, social and emotional development: helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, form positive relationships and respect others, develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings, understand appropriate behaviour in groups and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The three prime areas are strengthened by four specific areas of learning: literacy, mathematics, understanding of the world, and expressive arts and design. These areas are connected, with learning in one particular area supporting learning in the others.

The Specific Areas:

Literacy: This area focuses on reading and writing. Children are taught phonics throughout the EYFS. Children will link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials to ignite their interests.

Mathematics: This area focuses on learning through practical activities and on using numbers and understanding shape, space and measure. We provide children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems. Children will also take part in practical activities to explore shapes, spaces and measure and will use language to describe these.

Understanding of the World: This area focuses on children's developing knowledge and understanding of their own environment, through learning about people and communities, the world and technology. It forms the foundation for later work in Science, Design and Technology, History, RE, Geography and ICT. We guide children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Expressive Arts and Design: This area focuses on the development of the child's imagination and her or his ability to communicate and express ideas and feeling in creative ways. It incorporates exploring and using media and materials. Creativity is fundamental to

successful learning. We enable children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

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. Through regular observations, we discover children's interests and assess what children know. We also assess how children learn and report to parents their children's individual dispositions and attitudes to learning.

Children have whole group and small group teaching and learning times which increase as they progress through the EYFS, including a daily phonics session, using the 'Read, Write, Ink' scheme, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach, as outlined by the EYFS. Each area of learning and development will be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL)

When advocating the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) practitioners will reflect on the different ways that children learn. A child's individual learning characteristic will determine the way they respond to both the teaching and learning taking place in the environment. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified by the EYFS 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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that staff 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 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 for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management; 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, which are shared with parents.

Learning through Play

At Hampden Gurney,

“Play is used as an essential part of 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. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must 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, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.” (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2017)

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