

Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School



Early Years Policy
November 2025

Introduction

At Hallcroft Infant School, we are committed to ‘preparing children for a lifelong love of learning’ and to providing the highest quality care and education for our children.

In the early years, our intention is to equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding for their future learning, but also for them to leave the reception year as kind, independent and resilient individuals that have the confidence and ability to communicate effectively, problem solve, develop ideas and think creatively.

By providing safe and nurturing learning environments and rich and challenging learning experiences, we aim for our children to not only fulfil their learning potential but to establish a positive foundation for a happy and rewarding life. We fully recognise and endorse the importance of the early years as outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), *‘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.’*

EYFS Legislation

The Statutory Framework for the EYFS sets the standards for learning, development and care of children from birth to five.

The EYFS is based on four guiding principles:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers;
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Principles for our Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The following principles provide the framework for our provision in our Early Years setting:

- Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand it.
- Effective education requires that practitioners understand that children develop rapidly and at different rates throughout their development - physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally.
- Practitioners provide an environment in which children develop and being to learn about the fundamental British Values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance and protected characteristics.
- Practitioners ensure all children feel included, secure and valued.
- Early years experiences build on what children already know and what they can do.
- No child is excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability.
- School works in partnership with parents, carers and their families.
- To be effective, our Early Years’ curriculum is carefully structured.
- We provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.
- Staff observe and respond appropriately to children.
- Well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by staff engages children effectively in the learning process.
- The children are provided with rich and stimulating experiences in a learning environment that is well planned and organised.

The Curriculum

Our curriculum reflects the EYFS Framework which details seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in early years settings: Our curriculum is ambitious and clearly sequenced across all areas:

Prime Areas:

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

Specific Areas:

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

Although the three prime areas of learning are fundamental to the development of each child, all seven areas are interrelated and are delivered in conjunction with each other.

The EYFS Framework also details three characteristics of effective teaching and learning which are considered when planning and guiding children's activities and the learning environment:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

These characteristics weave through all seven areas of learning and develop as children learn new things, acquire new skills, develop socially and emotionally and become better communicators.

At Hallcroft, our aim is to provide an ambitious, broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum which addresses the children's social and emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment.

We carefully consider and plan a progressive curriculum around engaging topics, specifically chosen to reflect the seven areas of learning and to create strong foundations for children's learning in Year 1. It takes account of children's interests and how children learn to maximise engagement and ensure progress for every child.

Teaching and Learning

The curriculum is delivered through a balance of child-initiated (play-based) and adult-led learning. Every day, children are given plenty of opportunity for prolonged periods of uninterrupted play so that they can learn through exploration, discovery, rehearsal and experimentation. Great care is given to setting up our indoor and outdoor learning environments to ensure that they facilitate what we would like the children to learn and also reflect the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Resources are chosen and enhancements planned that encourage children to collaborate, persevere and problem solve whilst at the same time developing their personal and social skills.

Alongside play-based learning, adult-led sessions take place to introduce new learning, develop vocabulary, share stories, and celebrate our achievements. These may take the form of whole class or small group sessions and are planned to be short, focused and interactive, providing further opportunity for sustained shared-thinking and collaborative working.

In Nursery and Reception daily phonics sessions take place following "Super sounds" phonics in Nursery and Anima Phonics in Reception.

Role of the Practitioner

Staff carefully plan enhancements to the continuous provision available during child-initiated learning, both indoors and outdoors, to provide a positive context for teaching and learning. Their role during this time is to provide high quality interactions with the children to support and extend learning and vocabulary, and to be alert to possibilities that will naturally enhance outcomes for children through play. This includes helping children to make connections in their learning and to reflect on what they have previously learnt to move them forward, through appropriate questioning and discussion.

The practitioners help to instil in children a love of stories, songs and rhymes and help them to develop their language and emotional connection to language through these interactions.

In addition, practitioners make skilled and meaningful observations of children which are used to identify children's Next Steps. This continual assessment provides a picture of every child's development and progress which is fed into planning, ensuring further quality play and activities are provided which encourage an appropriate level of challenge for each child.

Planning

Planning:

- is a continuous process that is informed by assessment of previous activities.
- responds to the needs of individual children

- involves all the adults in the setting.
- is in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework:

The Early Years curriculum at Hallcroft has been carefully designed to support the children’s learning from entry into Nursery to the end of Reception. Each area of learning has been broken down half termly to allow staff to know exactly what the children need to be taught in order to achieve at that point in the year. Our curriculum clearly identifies and sequences the key knowledge and skills that children will learn across the EYFS.

Our curriculum is hinged on the use of high-quality texts, including our “ten favourite books” which staff use to anchor their teaching while supporting the children’s experience and love of stories. We aim to support the children to build a wide vocabulary and to be able to confidently communicate about their learning.

Assessment

Continual assessments are made of the children’s learning and this information is used to inform future planning to reflect identified needs.

The assessment processes in the EYFS:

- Offers all our children an opportunity to show what they know, understand and can do
- Recognises all the areas of learning in the EYFS
- Considers the characteristics of effective teaching and learning of individual pupils
- Relates to clear learning intentions
- Enables staff to plan more effectively
- Helps parents to be fully involved in their child’s progress

Forms of Assessment	Purpose
Nursery and Reception baseline assessments are completed within six weeks of a child starting school. Each child is assessed using a combination of the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) (for Reception children) and practitioner observations. Formative assessment in the form of notes about individual children during group activities e.g. maths or literacy.	Individual observations help plan for learning based on child’s starting points. · Baseline provides a basis for discussion with parents about their child’s learning and development. To determine those that are secure in their learning or those that will require further support.
Phonics assessments are completed at the end of each half term in nursery and at the end of each phase in reception	To monitor the acquisition of phonic knowledge. This allows practitioners to identify children who will benefit from further support and intervention
Detailed, B-squared Early Steps assessments for those children who are working significantly below age-related expectations	To recognise those small but significant steps of progress for children · To help us to identify and remove any barriers to learning and thereby facilitate access to our curriculum.
Discussion of pupil progress at termly Pupil Progress Meetings. Discussions with specific curriculum coordinators	To monitor and review the effect of actions and support implemented for children with identified concerns.
Statutory EYFS Profile. Reception children are assessed against the Early Learning Goals outlined in the EYFS Framework	To support staff to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child’s development at the end of the Foundation Stage. · To inform parents of their child’s development. · To inform a dialogue with the Year 1 teacher to aid a successful transition to Key Stage 1.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Early Years Lead and members of the Senior Leadership Team will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the appropriate curriculum and the evaluation of its success. This information will be shared with Early Years staff at regular meetings and will be used to support future planning and development initiatives. The Early Years staff are responsible for the day to day running of their classes.

Behaviour Management

The class teacher has the overall responsibility for Behaviour Management supported by the other members of the team. All practitioners follow whole school behaviour policy guidelines. The children are aware of the schools' rules through circle time and through positive behaviour being reinforced through praise. We follow the whole school Jigsaw PSHE programme and Take 5 breathing practices to help support the children's personal and social development and self-regulation strategies

Transition

Transition into Nursery

- Our head teacher welcomes visits from all prospective parents and children, and they are given individual tours of the school.
- Parents/Carers and Toddlers are invited to join in a weekly Toddler Group which is held in our nursery classroom and staffed by nursery practitioners. This enables the children and parents to form positive relationships with staff and other families prior to their child starting nursery. The children gain familiarity with the setting and some routine activities such as snack and story which helps them to settle quickly into the class routines.
- Prospective nursery children who have been unable to attend Toddler Group are invited into Nursery in July for a Stay and Play' session with their parents before their start in school.
- The Nursery teacher completes a home visit prior to admission with the Nursery Teacher and EYP one of which will be the child's Key Worker.
- The Nursery teacher analyses all the admissions forms for the children entering Nursery and if necessary, will speak to the child's previous setting or the child's parents to obtain further information to support a child's special educational needs.
- Staff ensure that all children are given appropriate support particularly during their first few days. A few children need extra support for a longer period of time and if this happens practitioners will work closely with the child and their parent/carer to solve any problems.

Transition from Nursery to Reception

Not all the children who attend the nursery at Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School will join the Reception class at Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School at the end of their time in Nursery. The Nursery will therefore support arrangements made by other schools to implement their induction programmes. Children's records and Learning Journeys are forwarded to children's new schools.

Nursery children have opportunities to use the school hall for P.E. and to take part in special events e.g. a Christmas Nativity. They join the rest of the school in the dining hall at lunch time. They have regular sessions on the school field such as nature walks and sports days. All of these experiences help the children to prepare for the transition to Reception, no matter where they go to school.

Transition into Reception arrangements at Hallcroft:

- The head teacher offers school tours to all prospective parents and children.
- Children who join Hallcroft from other settings, or who have not previously attended an alternative provider will be offered a home visit from our Reception Teacher, which allows families and children to build positive relationships with staff prior to the transition sessions.
- In July, children visit the reception class for a morning meet their new teacher and experience their new classroom. Following this session children and parents/carers are invited to a Welcome Meeting where the Class teacher meets the parents and the children can show their families around the classroom. The Reception teacher will also speak about induction and parents receive an information pack.
- The settings attended by children other than Hallcroft are contacted and SEN and other needs are communicated at this point.

- In the Autumn term we offer another Parents Meeting where reading, phonics and other curriculum information is shared.
- Nursery / Reception teacher handover meetings

Transition to Reception Classes other than Hallcroft

- Reception teachers from other schools are welcome to come and visit the children entering their schools in our Nursery setting and liaise with the Nursery teacher.
- The children are encouraged to attend the new school's transition programme in the summer term.
- The SENCO will liaise with the new school's SENCO if required.
- The safeguarding lead will pass on a file and either phone or meet with staff at the next school.

Activities to aid transition from Reception to Year 1

- Reception children join the KS1 children in whole school celebrations, assemblies etc
- The Year 1 teacher spends sometime within the Reception class during the Summer term e.g. sharing work and story time.
- Children take part in a Summer Term class transition morning.
- Reception /Year 1 teacher handover meeting
- A meeting is held for parents by the Year 1 teacher to offer reassurance and share expectations with parents/carers.

In Year Admissions

Any child starting in Nursery or Reception outside of the usual admission dates will be allocated a start date. Home visits occur where possible, but there will be close liaison between Nursery and Reception staff and parents.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Hallcroft Infant & Nursery School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. See our Special Education Needs Policy and our Equality Policy.

Every child needs to achieve success in order to develop a positive self-image. We recognise that all our children, including those with special educational needs, require a differentiated approach in order for them to have access to the whole curriculum and therefore reach their potential.

Partnerships

Partnership with Parents

Working closely with parents during their child's time in the Foundation Stage will result in a positive impact on a child's successful development and learning. The partnership needs a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise to support the child fully.

To achieve an effective partnership with parents we will:

- Show respect and understanding for the role of the parent in their child's education.
- Give parents opportunities to discuss their child's development and to listen to concerns they have.
- Ensure our settling in arrangements are flexible, giving children time to become secure and all adults involved in this - staff, parents and carers - time to discuss each child's needs.
- Make all parents feel welcome and valued.
- When appropriate use the knowledge and expertise of parents and other family members to support learning opportunities in the classroom.
- Use a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum.
- Discuss children's progress and achievements through parents evenings
- Involve parents in continuing relevant learning activities at home. Similarly, experiences at home will be used to develop learning at school.
- Celebrate children's achievements and experiences at home, for example through sharing Wow moments on Acorns

Role of the Key Worker

A key worker has a special responsibility for the education and welfare of a group of children in Nursery, to help them become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. Every child is allocated a key worker who will be the class teacher or an Early Years Practitioner. The class teacher however has overall responsibility for the learning and development of all children in the class.

Welfare

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Both our Nursery and Reception Teacher are trained Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) alongside our head teacher. Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety, Child Protection, Intimate Care etc.

Use of Cameras and Mobile Phones

Staff are prohibited from using their personal cameras in the setting. Staff and visitor's bags, personal possessions and mobile phones are stored away from the children in a secure cupboard/area. The use of mobile phones is prohibited in Nursery and Reception when children are present, and this applies to staff, parents/carers and visitors. (Please see our policy on ICT Acceptable Use).

Safer Eating and Nutrition guidance

We follow Safer-Eating protocols and guidance regarding age-appropriate meals and snacks. This is shared with our parents in their home visit information packs

Paediatric First Aid

All foundation stage staff are trained in Paediatric First Aid, which is updated routinely as required. Pupil specific training is completed when required e.g. epi-pen training, epilepsy training etc...

Intimate Care

Staff ensure pupils privacy and dignity is maintained during intimate care practises (see Intimate Care Policy)

Safer Recruitment

At Hallcroft Infant and Nursery School we adhere to the strengthened safeguarding requirements as stated in the EYFS framework 2025.

Staff Medication

Any medication a staff member may require must be stored safely away from children.

Staff and Professional Development

The Early Years staff will attend appropriate courses/information evenings to extend knowledge, skills and expertise and in order to keep up to date and abreast of educational developments. The information is then shared with members of the team and, where appropriate, fed back to the whole school staff.

Please see all other policies displayed on our School Website.