

# NEW HALL PREPARATORY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM POLICY

## 1. Introduction

“We believe that New Hall, a Catholic Boarding and Day school, enables pupils to meet confidently the challenges of the wider world. Here, pupils from many traditions are educated in an environment where academic excellence is achieved. This is brought about in surroundings where relationships are based on the Gospel values of trust and respect.”

As a Catholic school, this Mission Statement lies at the heart of all we do. We recognise that all our pupils are made in the image and likeness of God; each one is special and unique. It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that each one discovers his/her strengths and gifts and this is done by providing a holistic curriculum which offers breadth, as well as depth, of learning.

## 2. Aims

- To support children in becoming competent and confident learners
- To provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in which creativity and expressiveness are valued
- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum for every child
- To treat each child as an individual with specific needs being met in appropriate ways
- To provide effective provision that will enable children to achieve their full potential

## 3. Principles and Objectives

At New Hall School it is our objective to follow the statutory framework and guidance set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. This document works on four main principles:

- A unique child - every child is a competent learner.
- Positive relationships - children learn to be strong and independent.
- Enabling environments - supporting and extending a child's development.
- Learning and Development - 3 prime and 4 specific areas of learning and development

In the Foundation stage these four principles are the focus for both planning and teaching and learning.

## 4. Curriculum Content

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) provides the curriculum framework for all practitioners working with children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. This guidance is inclusive of all practitioners working within the Foundation Stage. The Foundation Stage is valued as a stage in its own right. It establishes expectations for most children to achieve by the end of Reception Year. These expectations are stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile as the Early Learning Goals.

The EYFS specifies requirements for learning and development and for safeguarding children and promoting their welfare.

The curriculum is divided into seven areas of learning and these are underpinned by the 'characteristics of effective learning'. These are 'playing and exploring - engagement', 'active learning - motivation' and 'creating and thinking critically - thinking'.

The seven areas of learning are:

Prime areas -

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

Specific areas -

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

**Communication and Language** development gives children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

**Physical Development** - provides opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - helps children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

**Literacy** encourages children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.

**Mathematics** provides children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

**Understanding The World** guides 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** encourages 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.

## 5. Provision

We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring Early Years teachers and classroom assistants who plan and work closely together to provide a high quality curriculum.

- We value our parent partnership with an open door policy.
- We have small classes and generous ratios which ensure that the needs of each child are met both academically and emotionally, helping to develop each child's confidence and independence.
- Small classes enable the teacher to provide an individual education planned around the needs and experiences of each child, so that true potential can be nurtured and realized.
- We provide a rich variety of academic, social, artistic, musical and sporting experiences.
- We have welcoming, child friendly and stimulating indoor and outdoor areas.
- Routines are established so that children begin to anticipate and feel confident to take the next step. **Pictorial timetables** give children the security to know and understand their routines.
- Clearly labelled and easily accessible resources.
- Children feel confident to have a go without the worry of making mistakes.

Transition opportunities are important to help children settle. This is achieved through the following ways:

- Each child has the opportunity to visit the school prior to starting.
- The transition between Nursery and Reception is calm, happy and successful. **Move up sessions**, encourage a gentle transition between the year groups and gives the Reception staff time to get to know the children, both from our Nursery and those coming from other settings.
- We aim to help each child develop the confidence to progress smoothly to Year 1 at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

In Pre-Reception and Reception children have access to an outdoor space next to their classrooms. Reception also have daily access to the main playground. These learning environments are set up to support and extend children's learning in all areas of the curriculum. Children are not allowed outside without adult supervision; ratio guidelines are always met.

## 6. Observation, Planning and Assessment

In Pre-Reception the children will be regularly assessed throughout the year by their Key Worker.

This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective early years practise.

Staff achieve this through:

- Observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child initiated activities and planned activities, and learning from and sharing with parents about what the child does at home.
- Considering the examples of development as stated in the unique theme: observing what children can do, and identifying the stage on their developmental pathway.
- Considering ways to support the child to strengthen and deepen their current learning and development.
- Considering the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care. This information is then effectively used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

Key workers use the 'Development Matters' section of the EYFSP for assessment guidelines. Children are assessed at the beginning and end of the year, using **ASPECTS**. Learning Development will be contacted if the team have any concerns about a child's progress. The Pre-Reception Manager is the named SENCO for Pre-Reception.

Reception staff will carry out an initial baseline assessment for each child. They will then continue to regularly assess the children using the EYFSP. Assessments will take place in groups and individually. Specialist staff will also carry out termly assessments in PE, Dance and Music.

Pupil progress will be tracked through termly Pupil Progress Meetings with teaching staff and the Pre-Reception Manager and Head of Early Years.

Parents will be informed of their child's progress through Parents' Evenings as well as by receiving a termly progress report on their child and viewing their Learning Journal. The final report of the academic year gives greater detail on a child's achievement and progress. Parents are welcome to make an appointment with their child's Class Teacher/Key Worker to discuss their child's progress should they have any concerns.

In the final term of the year in which the child reaches age five the EYFS profile will be completed for each child. The profile provides parents and carers, practitioners and teachers with a clear picture of a child's development, knowledge, understanding and abilities, as well as their progress against expected levels. It furthermore prepares Year 1 teachers for individual children's readiness, needs and next steps. The profile will reflect upon the schools on-going observation and relevant records.

The teacher will determine whether the child is meeting the expected levels, exceeding them or below expected levels of development. The child's level of development is assessed against the 17 early learning goals.

All Reception children in complete a Baseline **and end of year PIPS Assessment**.

In compliance with Early Years regulations parents may have access to developmental records about their child e.g. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, etc.

We value contributions from parents and carers and these will be added to a child's Learning Journey.

## **7. Equal Opportunities and Learnind Development**

All children have equal access to the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and the resources of the school. Learning tasks are matched to the child's individual needs. Children are given opportunities to explore and enjoy stories, poetry, music, art and play materials from a wide range of cultures.

Children are encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs, gender and ability. We support the belief that everyone is unique in their own right and act upon it.

- A disabled toilet is available within the school to cater for children with physical disabilities.
- Our curriculum respects a child's ethnic faith and cultural heritage, and the special needs of each child, by ensuring that these areas are covered within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images.
- **We have on our staff an E.F.L teacher, ENCO and SENCO.**
- It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that we identify and help those children in our care with additional educational needs including more able and talented children.

It is important to identify those children who find some areas of learning difficult, so that strategies to help them can be put in place as soon as possible. Foundation Stage staff will liaise with the Head of Learning Support and these children will have an Individual Education Plan if necessary. Staff will work closely with the parents and meet with them regularly.

We have regard for the Single Equality Act 2010.

**Please see the whole school "Equality and Diversity" Policy.**

## 8. Resources

Children have regular access to a wide variety of resources inside and outside of the classroom.

Resources will be regularly checked to ensure they are clean and safe to use. Any broken resources will be thrown away immediately.

## 9. Admissions

Admission takes place from 2 ½ years and we accept children in the Nursery at any time during the academic year for a minimum of 2 sessions. Sessions are increased by consultation with parents and teachers at appropriate time for each individual child.

The school welcomes children in to Reception from other settings at any time during the academic year.

Children are invited to join us for a taster session before joining the school.

For further details please see the whole school Admissions Policy.

**Further information regarding the EYFS may be found on the DfE website [www.education.gov.uk](http://www.education.gov.uk)**