



**Early Years
Intent and
Implementation
Overview**

Intent

At Highfields, our main intent is to equip all children with the skills and knowledge so that they have a smooth transition into the next stage of their education inclusive of all children of their backgrounds and needs. We aim to provide stimulating and challenging environments that promote independence, build positive relationships and provides the right foundation for good future progress in school.

In line with Highfields Academy's core aims, we aim:

To create learning environments where all children feel safe, valued, positive and happy.

To recognise individual's talents and to strive to help everyone achieve academic, creative, sporting and personal success.

To provide an inspiring and enriching curriculum.

To promote the wellbeing of all, through healthy life choices and building resilience.

To encourage good citizenship based on the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, cultures and lifestyles.

We endeavour to help everyone to be respectful, rewarded, resilient, responsible and to be a rounded individual.

Implementation

At Highfields we have created a curriculum that incorporates a balance of adult led and child-initiated learning opportunities. It is a curriculum based on the principles of the EYFS Statutory Framework 2021, that takes into consideration children's prior early learning and development experiences; their starting points at Highfields; and their future learning when they progress into the National Curriculum. How our provision and interactions change and adapt take into consideration and are reflective of each cohort's needs. Ongoing informal observations of how children play and learn inform next steps, including enhancements in provision; adult directed activities; interventions for support; adult interactions through play and direct teaching sessions. Staff work closely as a team to consistently reflect upon all aspects of teaching and learning and plan changes to ensure children are given opportunities to learn with depth and breadth.

Shared Input

Each day, the children meet as a class to access the shared input for phonics, Numeracy and Literacy and the wider curriculum including PSHE, PE, Religious Education, history, science, geography, music, and art.

Adult led and independent group work

Following the shared input, the children will have a chance to demonstrate their comprehension of new concepts by working in small groups lead or supervised by an adult.

Provision

Continuous Provision is the provision for learning in the absence of an adult. Although the educators in EYFS interact with the children, observe play and model language needed to move the learning forward, it is the carefully designed environment and open-ended resources that develop children's skills in personal interaction and exploration. Continuous provision transcends all areas of learning and provides the children with the opportunity to demonstrate the three characteristics of effective learning (playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically.) The children have the freedom to independently choose the activities and resources on offer and to become active learners.

Interactions

At Highfields, the role of the adults is to interact with the children whilst they learn, showing genuine interest, inviting the children to elaborate and tuning in to the child's thinking. The adults support children's interactions with their peers and focus on vocabulary development. The adults also scaffold and model desired behaviours and turn taking – acting as good role models for the children to learn from. The Characteristics of Effective Learning are underpinned in all areas of learning and as part of their interactions the adults assess which characteristics underpin the children's play and further support the development of these through their questioning. Interactions enable staff to assess where the children are in their learning and plan the appropriate next steps.

Assessment

Regular checkpoints have been devised for Pre-school and reception children based on Development Matters. Alongside these, the observational checkpoints in Development Matters are used to support and facilitate conversations with parents.

Assessments at regular points throughout the year, allow all EYFS staff to contribute and discuss children's current learning stage and individual next steps. Through this, children that are not working at the expected standard are clearly identified. An effective working partnership with our school SENCO and other external agencies allows us to identify children that may present with additional needs and plan interventions of support that are required as part of the child's individual support plan. As part of our ongoing assessments, other key interventions are planned to help to close gaps and ensure children catch up with learning where needed.

The role of the environment

Areas within the outdoor and indoor environments are set up to encourage co-operation and communication between the children, with choices of activities to extend their play, challenge their thinking and provide opportunities for deeper learning.

Vocabulary development

We strive to provide a language rich learning environment that promotes the development of vocabulary, using high quality texts to offer stimulating and engaging hooks into learning opportunities for all children. Fundamental to our curriculum and delivery of this is providing high quality continuous provision and adult interactions that evolve and progress throughout the year. This is planned to ensure that all children make continuous progress and are given opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge that are age appropriate and relevant to their individual next steps in learning.

Phonics

At Highfields, the children are taught to read using the Little Wandle phonics programme. The children start their phonic journey when they enter Pre-school and are exposed to rich opportunities that support not only their vocabulary development but also their phonic development as is specified by Little Wandle.

Reading

At Highfields, we believe reading to be of utmost importance to creating lifelong learners and therefore we teach it daily in terms of phonics. The children are taught in small groups, three times a week, and assessed every half term in order to tailor the teaching to their individual pace.

We plan carefully the books that we will share with the children. We read to the children as often as we can, adding a variety of genres and exposing the children to stories, poems and non-fiction books depicting diverse cultures and characters.

Writing

The children have multiple opportunities for mark making, writing and practising their fine motor skills – through the continuous provision as well as adult-led activities. Daily fine motor sessions exercise little hands and leads to a comfortable pencil grip. Children have to

opportunity to write or mark make in all areas of their environment. We plan exciting challenges to instil the sense of awe, mystery and magic into writing by providing opportunities for meaningful mark making. Chalkboards and whiteboards indoors and out encourage writing for different purposes.

Numeracy

Numeracy is taught daily as a whole class session, with opportunities to explore new concepts or show their understanding either in the continuous provision or small groups led by an adult. Our objective is to ensure that all the children develop firm foundations for the understanding of mathematical concepts such as shape, number and numerical patterns through play and hands on, meaningful experiences. In Reception, we follow the White Rose Scheme.

Parental Engagement

Parents are the child's first and most influential educators. Together with the teachers, they have a crucial role to play in the children's learning. The impact they have on the children's education is greater if the school and the parents work together. Providing regular links with home in a variety of ways, allows us to maintain our close working partnership with parents and carers. The use of Tapestry allows families to contribute to their child's overall learning journey and share 'wow' moments from home as well as seeing those that have happened in school too.

The teacher is available at the door every afternoon for quick questions and a brief handover. If a longer discussion is required, parents are encouraged to make an appointment with the teacher after school.

Transition into Reception

We strive for all children to begin their journey at Highfields with the best possible starting points. Through carefully planned transition, children and families are welcomed into school throughout the summer term prior to starting school, allowing staff to understand each individual child's background, needs and next steps.

Readiness for Y1

The start of transition from Reception to Year 1 begins during the Summer term. The children will get to know their new year 1 teacher through a whole school transition day. A transition meeting is held for the Reception teacher to discuss each individual child with the Year 1 class teacher(s).

Further to this, opportunities to work in a more formal way will be introduced in the Summer, for example, by encouraging children to record work in a more structured way.