

NEW HALL EARLY YEARS CURRICULUM POLICY

1 Introduction

New Hall, a Catholic boarding and day school, provides **the best start in life**, enabling students to meet confidently the challenges of the wider world.

Here **academic excellence** is achieved in surroundings where relationships are based on **care, trust and respect**.

We **welcome** students from many traditions, building a Christian **community** that has at its heart **prayer** and **service** to others.

As a Catholic school, this Mission & Ethos 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'.

4.1 The seven areas of learning

4.1.1 Prime areas

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

4.1.2 Specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

5 Provision

We have a team of highly qualified, dedicated, professional and caring Early Years teachers and 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 realised
- 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 feel confident to access the activities and environment independently. Pictorial timetables give children the security to know and understand their routines
- Resources are clearly labelled and easily accessible.

- Children are encouraged to become resilient learners.

5.1 Transition opportunities

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

- Each child and parent/carer has the opportunity to visit the School prior to starting and to meet their child's Key Person
- The transition between Pre-School and Reception is calm, happy and successful. 'Taster' sessions encourage a gentle transition between the year groups and gives the Reception staff time to become familiar with the children, both from our Pre-School and those coming from other settings
- Early Years staff are allocated time to discuss each child and how their needs can be best met
- We aim to help each child to transition smoothly to Year 1 at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Information sessions for parents are held throughout the year

All Early Years 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 Planning, observation, and assessment
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In planning and guiding children's activities, we must reflect on the different ways that children learn. The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning 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
- creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links, and develop strategies for doing things

In the Nursery Division, the children will be regularly assessed throughout the year by their Key Person, the Nursery Manager and Deputy Nursery Manager.

Two Year Checks are provided for children in the Nursery when they are between 24 and 27 months old. This is an assessment that covers the seven areas of learning and incorporates information from the parents, the Key Person and the Health Visitor. This enables practitioners to provide a holistic view of the individual child.

In Reception, the children will be regularly assessed by their Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant.

This is achieved through detailed observation and assessment. This observation and on-going formative assessment is at the heart of effective Early Years practice.

Staff achieve this through:

- observing children as they act and interact in their play, everyday activities, child-initiated activities and adult-led activities, and learning from and sharing with parents about what the child does at home
- observing what children can do and identify their next steps in development
- 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

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.

In the Nursery, children are assessed during the first six weeks through observations, and a mixture of formal and summative assessments, to gauge their levels of understanding, and then continually assessed throughout the year.

The SENDCO will be contacted if the team have any concerns about a child's progress. The Nursery Deputy Manager is the named SENDCO for Nursery and Pre-School and will monitor children's progress in the Nursery in conjunction with the Head of Learning Development.

Pupil progress will be tracked through termly Pupil Progress Meetings with teaching staff, Nursery Manager, Deputy Nursery Manager, SENDCO, Director of Learning and Teaching and Head of Pre-Preparatory Division.

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 interactive Learning Journey, 'Tapestry'. 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/Nursery Manager to discuss their child's progress should they have any concerns.

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

The teacher will determine whether the child has met the Early Learning Goals. The child's level of development is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals.

In compliance with Early Years regulations, parents may have access to developmental records about their child.

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

7 Fundamental British Values in Early Years Foundation Stage

The fundamental British values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage.

7.1 Democracy: making decisions together

As part of the focus on self-confidence and self-awareness, as cited in Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- Staff can encourage children to see their role in the bigger picture, encouraging children to know their views count, value each other's views and values and talk about their feelings, for example when they do or do not need help. When appropriate demonstrate democracy in action, for example, children sharing views on what the theme of their role play area could be with a show of hands.
- Staff can support the decisions that children make and provide activities that involve turn-taking, sharing and collaboration. Children should be given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued.

7.2 Rule of Law: understanding rules matter as cited in Personal, Social and Emotional Development

As part of the focus on managing feelings and behaviour:

- Staff can ensure that children understand their own and others' behaviour and its consequences, and learn to distinguish right from wrong
- Staff can collaborate with children to create the rules and the codes of behaviour, for example, to agree the rules about tidying up and ensure that all children understand rules apply to everyone

7.3 Individual Liberty: freedom for all

As part of the focus on self-confidence & self-awareness and people & communities, as cited in Personal Social and Emotional development and Understanding the World:

- Children should develop a positive sense of themselves. Staff can provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities, for example through allowing children to take risks on an obstacle course, mixing colours, talking about their experiences and learning.
- Staff should encourage a range of experiences that allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions, for example in a small group discuss what they feel about transferring into Reception Class.

7.4 Mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs: treat others as you want to be treated

As part of the focus on people & communities, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships as cited in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World:

- Managers and leaders should create an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance where views, faiths, cultures and races are valued and children are engaged with the wider community

- Children should acquire a tolerance and appreciation of, and respect for, their own and other cultures; know about similarities and differences between themselves and others and among families, faiths, communities, cultures and traditions and share and discuss practices, celebrations and experiences
- Staff should encourage and explain the importance of tolerant behaviours such as sharing and respecting other's opinions
- Staff should promote diverse attitudes and challenge stereotypes, for example, sharing stories that reflect and value the diversity of children's experiences and providing resources and activities that challenge gender, cultural and racial stereotyping
- A minimum approach, for example having notices on the walls or multi-faith books on the shelves will fall short of 'actively promoting'

7.5 What is not acceptable

- Actively promoting intolerance of other faiths, cultures and races
- Failure to challenge gender stereotypes and routinely segregate girls and boys
- Isolating children from their wider community
- Failure to challenge behaviours (whether of staff, children or parents), that are not in line with the fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and belief

8 Equal opportunities and accessibility

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

- An accessible toilet and lift are available within the School to cater for children with physical disabilities
- Our curriculum respects a child's faith and cultural heritage, and the special needs of each child, by ensuring that these are covered within our indoor and outdoor activities, circle time and assemblies, visitors, role play, books and positive images
- We are able to utilise the expertise of the EAL department and SENDCOs

Please see Whole School 'Equality and Diversity' Policy and Whole School 'Visitor Policy'.

9 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 as part of the daily/weekly risk assessments undertaken in Nursery and Reception classes. Any broken resources will be thrown away immediately.

Resources will reflect a variety of cultures and not promote gender stereotyping.

Further information regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) may be found on the DfE website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>.

Please also refer to the *Whole School Curriculum Policy*.