

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. This policy relates to Nursery, Pre-School and Reception provision at New Hall. It should be read alongside the current EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026.

2 Aims

- To support children in becoming competent and confident learners, promoting learning and development across all seven statutory areas
- 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 with equality of opportunity
- To treat each child as an individual with specific needs being met in appropriate ways, including children with SEND and children learning English as an additional language
- To provide effective provision that will enable children to achieve their full potential and prepare them for a successful transition to Key Stage 1
- To form a strong partnership with parents and carers

3 Principles and objectives

At New Hall School it is our objective to follow the current 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 unique, constantly learning and capable of being resilient, confident and self-assured
- Positive relationships – children learn to be strong and independent

- Enabling environments – supporting and extending a child’s development through responsive teaching, support based on individual interests and needs, and partnership with parents
- Learning and Development – children develop and learn at different rates and the EYFS framework covers all children, including those with SEND

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

4 Curriculum content

The statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework sets the learning and development requirements for practitioners working with children from birth to the end of the Reception Year.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) is the statutory assessment completed at the end of the EYFS and does not take the place of the curriculum. 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 Early Learning Goals:

- describe expected development at the end of the EYFS
- support holistic “best-fit” judgements at that point
- must not be used as the curriculum or to restrict the breadth of children’s experiences
- need not be used for children below Reception age

Planning must reflect each child’s needs, interests and stage of development and provide challenging, enjoyable experiences across all areas. Children with English as an additional language should have:

- sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English
- assessment of communication, language and literacy in English
- where English is not secure, exploration with parents of the child’s abilities in their home language to determine whether there is a language delay

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 School’s curriculum provides activities and experiences covering the educational programmes in all seven areas. The curriculum is blended to incorporate a balance of child-led play, adult modelling and adult-guided teaching. Reception learning and teaching concentrates on an increasing focus on essential knowledge and skills in the specific areas in preparation for Key Stage 1.

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
- Screen use is purposeful, age-appropriate and does not displace conversation, physical activity, play or sleep

5.1 Transition opportunities

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

- Every child is assigned a key person whose role is to: tailor care, help the child settle, build relationships with parents and facilitate specialist support where appropriate
- 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 that are encouraged to provide information to inform continuity of learning

- 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. The Reception to Year 1 transition involves professional dialogue about each child's learning, development, needs and appropriate next steps
- Information sessions for parents are held throughout the year

All Early Years children have access to an outdoor space next to their classrooms. All children receive daily access to an outdoor play area or, where this is not possible, planned daily outdoor activity unless conditions make it inappropriate. 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; the statutory staff-to-child ratio, qualification, supervision and paediatric first-aid requirements are 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 Head of Nursery and the Nursery Manager. We provide next steps for each child that are shared with parents and closely monitored.

Two Year Checks are provided for children in the Nursery when the child is aged between two and three. 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 school baseline assessment for each child to inform teaching. 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. Concerns about progress in any prime area will be discussed with parents or carers so that additional or specialist support may be considered. The Head of Nursery 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, Head of Nursery, 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, viewing their interactive Learning Journey, 'Tapestry', consistent handovers each day, and being informed of their child's next steps. 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/Head of Nursery/Nursery Manager to discuss their child's progress should they have any concerns.

The EYFS Profile will be completed for each child in the final term of the academic year in which the child reaches five and no later than 30 June, except for the limited deferred-assessment circumstances. 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 using their professional knowledge and judgement, whether the child has met the Early Learning Goals. Reasonable adjustments for children with SEND. The child's level of development is assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals as either "expected" or "emerging".

In compliance with Early Years regulations, provision of a copy will be made to the prospective Year 1 teacher and results will be shared with parents, offering an opportunity for discussion. We value contributions from parents and carers and these can be added to a child's interactive Learning Journey.

Results can be reported to the local authority upon request and transfer of assessment information must occur within 15 days when requested following a move of setting.

The fundamental British values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Mutual Respect and Tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs form an important part of learning at the 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 beliefs

8 Equal opportunities and accessibility

New Hall School are committed to ensuring inclusive access, non-discrimination and reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 for all children 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. The School considers and provides appropriate support for children with SEND and has regard to the *SEND Code of Practice* where applicable.

- 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. Damaged items will

be withdrawn from use immediately and repaired or disposed of in accordance with school procedures

Resources will reflect a variety of cultures and not promote gender stereotyping. In accordance with current guidance the School will ensure safe, inclusive and developmentally appropriate use of digital devices.

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

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

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