

Holme Slack Community Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

Rationale

"It is vital that we get to know and value all young children. All children learn more in the period from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them catch up and keep up is in the early years. Every child can make progress if they are given the right support."

"When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we can give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow" (Development Matters 2020).

At Holme Slack Community Primary School, the Early Years Foundation Stage is viewed as a distinctive phase of education that integrates the care and education of our youngest children. We believe that all children are unique and bring with them a diverse range of previous experiences and learning, which must be acknowledged and built upon. It is vital that parents are valued as children's first educators and that they are active partners in their child's school education.

Our Core Purpose

At Holme Slack Community Primary School, we provide highly effective teaching and learning within a culture of challenge, nurture, and support. We support all children to progress to be the best they can be. Our curriculum is carefully planned to each cohort's needs, ensuring that as many children as possible achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of the EYFS and build upon this in subsequent years.

Our Approach

We are proud to be Hygge Accredited, which means our environment is extremely important to us. It is thoughtfully planned and considered the 'third teacher' in line with the Reggio Emilia approach. We create a calm, engaging, and well-structured environment that supports children's well-being and learning.

Leadership and Assessment

Mrs. Molyneux is the EYFS Lead and Class Teacher. Mrs. Molyneux is also a Forest School Leader and believes in providing meaningful outdoor learning experiences that support holistic development.

Assessment is carried out continuously through questioning, observations, and interactions with children. Additionally, formal half-termly assessments help track progress and inform next steps in learning. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is conducted within the first six weeks of the children starting.

Principles

Our EYFS policy aligns with our school vision, values, and curriculum statement. It incorporates the four overarching principles of the EYFS:

- 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 with support from adults who respond to their individual interests and needs.
- We recognise the importance of all areas of learning and development, ensuring inclusivity for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our Unique Curriculum

Our curriculum is carefully tailored to each cohort's needs and prioritises Communication and Language Development, Personal, Social, and Emotional Development, and Physical Development. We ensure children engage with the wider community, offering experiences such as Adventure Thursdays, where we visit local places, shops, and outdoor spaces to enrich learning.

We also build strong relationships with parents, holding 1:1 meetings to ensure we get to know each child deeply. Parent-school links are highly valued, and we strive to work collaboratively with families to support children's development.

The Areas of Learning and Development

We follow the 2021 EYFS statutory framework, ensuring that teaching is embedded within the seven areas of learning and development:

Prime Areas

- Communication and Language (Listening, Attention & Understanding; Speaking)
- Physical Development (Gross & Fine Motor Skills)
- Personal, Social, and Emotional Development (Self-Regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships)
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Specific Areas

- Literacy (Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing)
- Mathematics (Numbers, Numerical Patterns)
- Understanding the World (Past & Present, People & Communities, The Natural World)

- Expressive Arts and Design (Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative & Expressive)

Our Pedagogy

We believe that learning takes place through purposeful play, adult-led sessions, and carefully planned environments. Play is at the heart of our pedagogy, as we recognise its vital role in fostering children's development. We value following children's interests, allowing them to explore, investigate, and make sense of the world around them. This approach helps to build engagement and enthusiasm for learning.

Special events and celebrations are integral to our curriculum, enabling us to create meaningful learning experiences that link to children's lives and cultures. We place great importance on valuing our children's cultural capital and drawing on their diverse backgrounds to enhance their learning journey.

We ensure that learning is influenced by the Hygge philosophy, creating a calm, nurturing environment where children feel safe and supported. This approach, along with our inspiration from the Reggio Emilia philosophy, sees the environment as the 'third teacher'—an essential tool in supporting children's learning, creativity, and development.

Through our thoughtful, responsive teaching, we encourage children to become independent thinkers, problem-solvers, and active participants in their own learning.

Early Reading, Language, and Mathematics

At Holme Slack Community Primary School, we foster a language-rich environment where high-quality talk is valued. We follow the Little Wandle Phonics Scheme, ensuring children develop strong reading foundations. Home reading books are matched to phonics ability, promoting decoding skills. We also focus on early comprehension and vocabulary development to close any learning gaps.

In Mathematics, we take a practical, play-based approach and use NCETM Mastering Number to ensure progression. We integrate numeracy into everyday experiences and use targeted questioning to deepen mathematical understanding.

Play and Outdoor Learning

We recognise the vital role of play in child development. Play is used as a vehicle for learning, and we support children in:

- Investigating and experiencing the world around them.
- Developing independence and social skills.
- Building resilience and problem-solving skills.

As a Forest School Leader, Mrs. Molyneux ensures outdoor learning opportunities support children's holistic development, fostering curiosity, risk-taking, and confidence in a natural environment.

Assessment and Reporting

Ongoing assessment is central to our approach. We:

- Observe and interact with children daily to assess progress.
- Use formal half-termly assessments to track development.
- Conduct the Reception Baseline Assessment within the first six weeks of school.

- Share assessments with parents during termly meetings and in an end-of-year written report.
- Submit EYFS profile data to the Local Authority (LA) at the end of Reception.

Safeguarding and Inclusion

The safety and well-being of our children is paramount. We create a secure, nurturing environment where children feel confident to explore and learn. We teach children about safety, risk assessment, and making healthy choices.

We are committed to inclusion, ensuring that children with additional needs receive tailored support. We work closely with parents and external agencies to provide the best interventions.

Parent Partnerships and Community Links

We deeply value parental involvement and ensure strong home-school links through:

- 1:1 meetings with families.
- Stay-and-play sessions.
- Home learning links.
- Regular communication via Class Dojo and workshops.
- Mrs. Molyneux being available at the gate for morning and afternoon communication.

We also engage with the local community, providing real-world experiences through visits to local places, shops, and nature areas to extend learning beyond the classroom.

Transition into EYFS and KS1

We ensure a smooth transition into Reception through:

- Close collaboration with pre-schools & nurseries.
- 1:1 meetings with parents to get to know each child well.
- Careful baseline assessments to inform planning.

As children transition into Year 1, we provide a fluid transition process, working closely with the Infants Lead Mrs Bilbao and the Year 1 teacher Mrs Kirkham to ensure continuity of learning and support.