

Hessle Mount School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the first part of the National Curriculum, focusing on the distinct needs of children aged from birth to the end of the reception year in primary school. At Hessle Mount School children join the Pre-School after their third birthday or at the beginning of any half term after their third birthday. Children then move into the Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. New children may also join the school at this time. (Compulsory schooling begins at the term after a child's fifth birthday.) Key Stage 1 begins for our children at the beginning of Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and it prepares children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do.
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunity for learning.
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- Personal, social and emotional well-being;
- Positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning;
- Social skills;
- Attention skills and persistence;
- Language and communication;
- Reading and writing;
- Problem solving reasoning and numeracy;
- Knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Physical development
- Creative development

The EYFS is based on four principles:

- * A Unique Child
- * Positive Relationships
- * Enabling Environments
- * Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Hessle Mount School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we give praise and encouragement, as well as celebrating / sharing assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Hessle Mount School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school.

At Hessle Mount we believe that all our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

We set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the (EYFS). Some children will progress beyond this point. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- providing a safe and supporting learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

We aim to protect the physical and psychological well being of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy)

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

At Hessle Mount School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2007. We understand that we are required to:

- * promote welfare of children
- * promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.

- * manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children’s stage of development and individual needs.
- * ensure all adults who look after children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- * ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- * ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development tailored to meet their needs.
- * maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

We endeavour to meet all these requirements. (See Hessle Mount School Welfare Policy)

Positive Relationships

At Hessle Mount School we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents and Partners

We recognise that parents are children’s first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- :
- talking to parents about their child before he/she starts in our school;
 - the children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school/Pre-School; Pre-school children spend a morning or afternoon in the Pre-school before their starting date, children who are starting Reception have the opportunity to spend an afternoon with their Reception teacher and some of their new classmates from the Pre-school.
 - completing the “All About Me” form when a child enters the school
 - signing the “Look What I Can Do” form each half-term
 - offering parents opportunities to talk about their child’s progress informally at any time and formally at the end of the Summer Term in the Pre-School and in the Spring Term in Reception. Parents receive “end of term updates” at the end of each term and a formal report at the end of the year.
 - encouraging parents to talk to the child’s teacher if there are any concerns;
 - having flexible admission arrangements in the pre-school to enable children and parents to become secure, and by allowing time to discuss each child’s circumstances;
 - encouraging free access to the children’s “Learning Journey” booklets and encouraging parents to sign and contribute to them
 - arranging activities to encourage collaboration between child, school and parents
 - an opportunity for daily communication with home and school through the use of the child’s “blue book”.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all the children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school each of the EYFS class teachers in Reception acts as a “Key Person” to all their children supported by the Teaching Assistant. In the Pre-School children are assigned their own Key Person. All EYFS staff meet regularly to ensure continuity and coherence by sharing information about the children’s achievements. The Pre-School children and staff have regular access to the main school, they join in with Friday assemblies, watch ‘main school class entertainments’ and the main the school are able to watch the Pre-School’s entertainment and sponsored events.

Enabling Environments

At Hessle Mount School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The planning within the EYFS follows the school's Long Term Plan and Medium Term Plans, which are based around themes. These plans are used by the EYFS teacher as a guide for weekly planning; however the teacher may alter these medium term plans in response to the needs (achievements and interests) of the children. This will be indicated on the weekly plans.

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of observation and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate. These observations are recorded in children's individual "Learning Journey" booklets. They also provide information provided by parents and from other settings. Each child's level of development is recorded against 13 assessment scales derived from the Early Learning Goals.

Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals and assessment scales. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the EYFS teacher.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active or be quiet and rest. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. The EYFS classes have direct access to the outdoors. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all six areas of learning.

Our Pre-school is situated in a bungalow within the grounds of the main school. It has been designed to make the children feel welcome and it has a 'homely' atmosphere. There are three main rooms, a 'construction' room, creative room including sand play and a quiet room where children can draw, make jigsaws, listen to music, use the computer or look at books quietly. The hall contains a home corner where children can play imaginatively and have room to be expressive. The garden offers opportunities to play with water and tend their own plants. The Pre-school use all the facilities of the main school, including the main hall, for games, movement to music, preparing for the pre-school entertainment for parents and also join the main school for assembly on Fridays. They use the newly completed computer suite / music room. The Pre-school have all the benefits of the stunning grounds of Hessle Mount School and use the outdoor environment as much as possible

Learning and Development

At Hessle Mount School we recognise that children learn and develop at different rates and in different ways. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter connected.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage as much as they do to the teaching in Key Stage 1 and 2. The teaching and learning in the Early Years curriculum is carefully planned and structured to meet individual needs.

We plan as a team, organising a range of experiences and opportunities based on ‘real’ events, which give children chance to make decisions and choices, work individually or in groups and explore the learning environment through;

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning and appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the process and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Play

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Active Learning

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Critical Thinking

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunities to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine

interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

None of these can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS teachers to follow the principles stated in this policy. There is a named coordinator responsible for the EYFS. This person will discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly and monitor the EYFS to provide feedback to the proprietor.

S Cutting
September 2008