



Nursery School & Children's Centre

Understanding of the World Policy (EYFS)

Policy Owner	Alison Hindle/Governors
Policy Version	1.1
Version Status	Current
Next Review Due	Reactive/Summer Term 2016
Policy Location	C:\Users\ahindle\Documents\Policies\HNS&CC Policies & documents

Understanding of the World Policy

Introduction

The curriculum at Highfield Nursery School and Children's Centre is based upon 'The Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS). The statutory framework published in 2012 by the Department of Education that sets the standards for the development, learning and care of children from birth to five.

The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific areas of learning, and the three characteristics of effective learning, set out below:

The prime areas of learning:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

The specific areas of learning:

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world**
- expressive arts and design

Characteristics of effective learning:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

This policy has been written to reflect philosophy and practice in relation to the provision for **Understanding of the World (UTW)**. It gives guidance on curriculum content, planning, learning teaching and assessment.

Aims

Below are the key things we are aiming to provide for our babies and young children

- To provide a rich bank of resources to encourage progress and provide the best outcomes in UTW through a range of enjoyable activities
- To respond and be flexible to the individual needs of children within all areas of UTW
- To involve families in supporting children's learning in this area
- To enable babies and children to find out about the world through exploration and from a variety of sources, including their families and friends, the media, and through what they see and hear
- For babies and children to receive regular opportunities to learn about different ways of life, to be given accurate information and to develop a respect for diversity
- To help children to learn to respect and value all people and learn the importance of treating people equally and fairly as they develop their Understanding of the World
- Involve children in the practical application of their knowledge and skills which will promote self-esteem through allowing them to make decisions about what to investigate and how to do it
- To create an environment which creates the best conditions for babies and young children to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in this area

The LD area of learning & associated Early Learning Goals (ELG)

Understanding of the World involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

ELG 13 People and communities: Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children do not always enjoy the same things, and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

ELG 14 The world: Children know about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things. They talk about the features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another. They make observations of animals and plants and explain why some things occur, and talk about changes.

ELG 15 Technology: Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes.

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.

The four themes of the EYFS underpin all the guidance

A Unique Child

Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Practitioners

- understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, plan for next steps
- support babies and children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- identify any need for additional support
- keep children safe
- value and respect all children and families equally

+ Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Positive relationships are

- warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging
- sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests
- supportive of the child's own efforts and independence
- consistent in setting clear boundaries
- stimulating
- built on key person relationships in early years settings

+ Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.

Enabling Environments

- value all people
- value learning

They offer

- stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
- rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
- support for children to take risks and explore

= Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

They foster the characteristics of effective early learning

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

See [Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) document pages 2 to 14](#) - published by The British Association for Early Childhood Education

Children's responses to what they see, hear and experience through their senses are individual and the way they represent their experiences is unique and valuable.

- Ensure every interaction is based on caring professional relationships and respectful acknowledgement of feelings of children and their families. Successful relationships become partnerships when there is two way communication and parents and practitioners really value each other's views and support in achieving the best outcomes for each child.
- The diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected.
- Effective practitioners value each child's culture and help them to make connections between experiences at home, the setting and community.
- All children are entitled to enjoy a full life in conditions which help them to take part.
- Each child will 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 methods of carrying out tasks. Adult support in this process enhances the child's ability to think critically and ask questions.

Positive Relationships

- Use parents' and carers' knowledge to extend children's experiences of the world.
- Help children become aware of, explore and question differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disability issues.
- Support children with sensory impairment by providing supplementary experiences and information to enhance their learning about the world around them.

Stimulating Environments

- Create a stimulating environment that offers a range of activities which will encourage children's interest and curiosity, both indoors and outdoors.
- Make effective use of outdoors, including the local neighbourhood.
- Use correct terms so that, for example, children will enjoy naming a chrysalis if the practitioner uses its correct name.
- Pose carefully framed open-ended questions, such as 'How can we...?' or 'what would happen if...?'

Learning and Development

- Children are provided with planned learning experiences which are based on first hand experiences that encourage exploration, experimentation, observation, problem solving, prediction, critical thinking, decision making and discussion
- Through practical learning experiences children develop their skills, understanding and knowledge for example, learning about the characteristics of liquids and solids by involving children in melting chocolate or cooking eggs
- Encourage children to tell each other what they have found out, to speculate on future findings or to describe their experiences. This enables them to rehearse and reflect upon their knowledge and to practise new vocabulary

- Children are supported as they develop independence in using a range of ICT equipment including cameras, photocopiers, CD players, tape recorders and programmable toys in addition to computers
- Give children accurate information which challenges cultural, racial, social and gender stereotypes

Inclusion

For further information please refer to our Inclusion policy.

Equal Opportunities

At Highfield Children's Centre we ensure the diversity of individuals and communities is valued and respected. No family or child is discriminated against. We strive to accommodate children's specific religions or cultural beliefs.

For further information please refer to our Equality and Diversity policy.

Planning

Short term planning

We believe that children make the most progress in their learning and development when they are interested, engaged and actively involved in their learning. For this reason we aim to use children's interests and individual needs as a starting point for planning. Parents/carers and practitioners fill in 'Finding Out About Me' sheets together and this gives us a good starting point for developing individualised planning. Our ongoing observations also give us an insight into the needs and interests of our babies, toddlers and children which again feeds into our planning. This way of working means that our planning is very flexible and will be amended in response to individual needs.

Every week practitioners are given non-contact time to complete the weekly planning sheet which identifies the focus for learning in their area of the unit. Practitioners also plan daily group times which are tailored specifically to the needs of their key children.

Medium term planning

Each term practitioners refer to a medium term plan which provides guidance for themes and learning objectives. These plans are differentiated for different ages and needs of our children. However, when a specific interest or need has been identified from observations of children, the plans should be amended.

Long term planning

Within the integrated unit, we have a two year rolling programme for long term planning. This provides an overview to aid practitioners in their medium/short term planning which is differentiated and provides breadth and balance across the curriculum. The objectives are linked to the EYFS Development matters statements.

Assessment

Formative Assessments

As part of our practice we make ongoing observations of the children in order to identify their interests, achievements and 'next steps'. These observations are recorded in a variety of ways including our 'Responding to Children' sheets, observation files and 'Learning Journeys'. In addition to written observations, practitioners are continually responding to children's individual needs on an ongoing basis as part of our general practice.

Summative Assessments

In order to get an overview of a group's or individual child's learning and development at a given time we make assessments against aspects on our 'pupil profiles' once a term. These aspects relate directly to the EYFS Development matters statements which allow us to do the following:

- Make an overall judgement about which band a child is currently working within
- track children's progress in each area of learning including UYW
- compare progress and attainment in each area of learning including UTW
- compare the progress of different groups of children
- set targets for areas requiring development

This information can then be used to target the needs of groups of children and areas of the curriculum which need to be a focus for improvement.

Resources

The majority of resources are stored in the following areas:

- Green room (UTW) - small world sets, e.g. discussion boxes, cars, people. Large and small construction sets, sand and water materials and investigative resources; such as magnets, natural resources, colour blocks, investigation boxes (minibeasts etc).
- Library – Story sacks/puppets, variety of music e.g. nursery rhymes, music
- Sensory room – see room specific resource list.
- Baby Sunshine room – variety of resources as above (age appropriate)

Outdoor Provision

We are fortunate that we have a large well equipped outdoor area which provides a wealth of opportunities for developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world. This includes a wild life area with bird feeders, a web frame, ladybird house and mini-beast area. We also have large planting areas where children can dig, plant seeds and grow vegetables. Outdoor provision has equal value as indoor provision in both the integrated unit and the baby room. Children are encouraged to experience and make observations of different weather conditions and have access to the outdoors on a daily basis unless it is unsafe. Sun hats are given to children to wear in the summer months and waterproof clothing is available in wet weather.

Safeguarding children

Where potentially hazardous tools such as scissors or woodworking tools are available staff will supervise the children's use of these tools. Tools, equipment and materials will be introduced to the children as appropriate for their individual development. Staff will support the children in the safe use and handling of such tools or equipment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed in Summer 2014

Quality of provision will be monitored through an annual environmental walk through, session observations, pupil progress, learning journeys and quality of planning. Children's attainment and progress is monitored through the analysis of our termly pupil profile assessments.

Resources will be audited once a year and any replacements needed will be requested.