



Early Years Policy – Horninglow Primary School: a de Ferrers Trust Academy

June 2018

Aims

At Horninglow Primary, within the Early Years Unit, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs in order that children make good progress.

Statutory Framework

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- 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, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning (within any registered setting, the focus will very much be on the prime areas of learning);
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation, assessment and the child's interest;

- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child initiated, supported by the adult;
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children; and
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment, indoors and out.

The Early Years Curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All of the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The Prime Areas of Learning are the essential foundations for children to work with and master before progressing into the Specific Areas of Learning.

Prime Areas of Learning:

- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Making relationships
- Self-confidence and self-awareness
- Managing feelings and behaviour
- Moving and handling
- Health and self-care
- Listening and attention
- Understanding
- Speaking

Specific Areas of Learning:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Reading
- Writing

- Numbers
- Shape, space and measures
- People and communities
- The world
- Technology
- Exploring and using media and materials
- Being imaginative

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

In the Early Years we use medium term plans using Cornerstones and the EYFS, based on a series of topics, each of which offers experiences in all seven areas, in both the inside and outside learning areas. We also follow the children's interests where appropriate. Please see our plans for more details. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remain flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Practitioners working with the youngest children in Nursery will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Children have whole group and small group teaching and learning times which increase as they progress through the EYFS, including a daily phonics session using 'Read Write Inc', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing. The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach, as outlined by the EYFS. Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult led and child-initiated activities. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, Early Years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further and develop their language skills for communicating.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

Regulatory requirements

We ensure that we implement the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (April 2017) and meet the associated regulatory requirements. The Early Years Leaders will attend training in the regulatory requirements.

Observation and assessment

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways and all are uploaded to the EYLog. All Early Years practitioners are encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own on-line learning profile, which are shared with parents.

Each half-term, we provide the parent's with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning, including strengths and next steps in learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the Reception teacher in preparation at two Parents Consultation sessions throughout the year. A final report is written at the end of the academic year outlining if the child has achieved the Early Learning Goal in each area of the curriculum and a Good Level of Development.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Partnerships

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on visits and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Inductions

Prior to a child starting at Horninglow, parents or carers will be invited for a tour of the school where staff will be happy to answer any questions they may have. In July prior to the children starting school an induction meeting is held for Nursery and Reception admissions. Staff provide parents with a detailed overview of the EYFS provision at Horninglow along with providing opportunities for questions.

Following this, taster sessions will be offered for the children to initially attend with a parent then to come for a session on their own.

Prior to a child starting at Horninglow EYFS, a home visit will be completed by the EYFS leader/Nursery teacher and the Parent Support worker. This provides an opportunity to ask further questions along with completing necessary paperwork to ensure a smooth start for the child starting school.

Transitions

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and childminders. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery/Reception to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners.

In the final term in Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.