



Hillside Academy
Early Years Foundation Policy

Introduction:

In formulating our Foundation Stage policy, we have considered the following issues:

- **PRINCIPLES**
- **PLANNING**
- **PROVISION**
- **PRACTICE**
- **PEDAGOGY**
- **PARTNERSHIP**
- **PROGRESS** (within which play is an over-riding factor).

At Hillside Academy, we recognise that children aged under five require a curriculum which is appropriately geared to their intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social and physical stage of development.

PRINCIPLES

- A Unique Child (Inclusive Curriculum)
- Positive Relationships (Key Person)
- Enabling Environments (High/Scope)
- Learning and Development (Next Steps)

Our Aim:

We aim to give the children the opportunity and encouragement to extend their experiences and develop their existing knowledge. We foster their socialisation, increase their confidence and self-expression, while developing their independence and encourage morality. We want the foundation years to be happy, exciting, challenging and successful for each child.

We recognise the need for a unique programme of learning in its own right, as well as being a preparation for the National Curriculum.

Our objectives:

- To provide a holistic structure based on the prime and specific areas of learning which interrelate.
- To provide:
 - Learning through play
 - Active learning
 - A developmental focus
 - An emphasis on developing independence
 - Involving the spontaneous
 - Close involvement of parents and children's local community

PLANNING.

The Foundation Stage Curriculum is based upon the seven areas of learning that make up the Early Years Framework (Development Matters). The Framework is divided into three **prime areas**:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional

And four **specific areas**:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

The **prime** areas provide the children with skills vital for their *learning* and *development*. The **specific** areas allow the children to *demonstrate* and *consolidate* them through planned activities and experiences delivered by the Foundation Stage practitioner(s).

The Foundation Stage is included in all School Policies and Schemes of Work.

Literacy through;

- Focus areas; reading and writing
- Developing stories
- Language development, communication skills, role play areas- tapes/ listening centre
- Prepared 'language rich' environments (i.e. high scope areas) around the topic that they are learning each week or term
- Through music (i.e. beat babies), counting beats, listening to/ playing with sounds (vocal and instrumental), sequencing skills through nursery rhymes
- Assemblies
- Shared reading/ group shared texts
- Writing policy/ developmental writing
- Reading/ library/ Information Communication Technology
- Phonics teaching- 'Letters and Sounds' document (Bug Club resources)

Letters and Sounds teaching;

- 'Letters and Sounds' document is used for the teaching of phonics for both F1 and F2
- Jolly phonics and Bug Club resources are used to support teaching
- In F1 phase 1 phonics is taught for fifteen minutes on a daily basis.
- In F2 phases 2 and 3 are taught. Sessions form the beginning part of the morning and last for twenty minutes.
- F2 children are divided into smaller ability groups depending upon what phase they are currently working at.
- Phonic sessions are delivered by the class teacher or an LSA
- Children are assessed on a half termly basis and assessments are recorded in the child's phonic record booklet.

Reading Books and High Frequency Words;

- In F1 at the beginning of the session parent and carers are encouraged to come in and share a book with their child
- In F2 children take home a reading book that they can read to their parent and carers
- Also, F2 children take sets of high frequency words home to learn. The words that are sent home will be suitable to the phase that they will be working in their phonic sessions

Mathematics through:

- The focus areas; number and shape, space and measures.
- The topic
- Practical activities (i.e. exploring patterns)
- Numeracy skills and mathematical language through role play (i.e. money, weighing, capacity)
- Creative activities (i.e. music and art)
- Water and sand play (capacity)
- Number games
- ICT (smart board, beebot)
- Outdoor play (positional language)

Understanding the World through:

- Focus areas; people and communities, the world, technology
- Exploration of the school/ local environment
- Topics (i.e. 'People who help us')
- Barnaby Bear (sense of place)
- Visitors (i.e. the school nurse, fire service)
- Whole school celebrations/ events
- First hand experiences (i.e. mini beast hunt, gardening)
- Visits arranged around the class theme (garden centre, farm)
- Investigation area in the classroom
- Sand and water tray
- High/ Scope choosing activities
- ICT, including use of the Smart board and programmable toys.

Barnaby Bear

- Children are introduced to Barnaby Bear in F1 either through story or linked to a 'Holidays' theme
- In F2 children take it in turns to take Barnaby home and write in his diary. At the end of the day children are encouraged to talk about what Barnaby did at their house and who he met (i.e. family members). This links to the theme 'all about me'
- He is also used during circle time sessions. At the start of the year children share their thoughts and feelings about starting school (as Barnaby has also started school with them)
- Barnaby also goes on holiday to different places and tells the children all about the place where he is visiting. Children participate in cross curricular themed weeks. Themes can include, the Caribbean, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Seaside holidays
- Barnaby also goes on holiday with the children and the children keep a diary while they are there, so they can later share with the rest of the class

Gardening;

- Sessions are planned for the F1 and F2 children to use the 'Sensory Garden' as often as possible (weather permitting)
- Wellington boots, weather proof clothing and garden tools are readily available for children to use
- For F2 children there is also a planting box situated outside the classroom
- Writing links are also made with the garden through 'Onion the Elf'.
- F2 children are introduced to 'Onion the Elf' (large puppet), this is usually linked to the growing/ environment themes. Children are encouraged to write to Onion the Elf and ask him questions relating to the topic they are learning about. Onion will write the children personalised replies. Once a week Onions letters are shared with the whole class, so that all the children can learn from his answers.

Expressive arts and design through;

- Focus areas; exploring and using media and materials, being imaginative
- Singing simple songs
- Exploring different instruments
- Participating with music activities

- Role play areas in the classroom
- Dance and movement
- Ring games and other simple games
- High/Scope creative areas
- Construction play
- Colour mixing and painting
- Using tools and techniques to assemble

Planning procedure:

- A long term plan
- A medium term plan
- A weekly plan with specific objectives that relate to the Early Learning Goals

PROVISION

Indoor Provision:

The following areas of provision are provided in both Foundation 1 and Foundation 2 settings.

They include;

- A listening/reading area (book corner, listening centre)
- A social/ dramatic role play area (i.e. home corner, castle)
- Creative area (painting easel, craft resources, model making)
- Maths area (counting, games, weighing, sorting apparatus, cash register)
- Construction area (wooden/ plastic bricks)
- Sand and Water area
- Malleable area (playdough, clay, salt dough)
- Small world (toy farm, dolls house)
- Writing area (a variety of different writing tools, i.e. white boards, pen, paper)
- Investigation area (to support the science topic, i.e. materials, growing etc)

Outdoor Provision:

Both Foundation 1 and Foundation 2 use the Outdoor Area that is situated next to the Foundation 1 setting.

The indoor areas of provision are also reflected through the outdoor area.

These areas include;

- Mark making area (i.e. paint brushes and buckets of water, chalk, clipboards and writing materials)
- Role Play area (i.e. garden centre, to extend from the indoor environment)
- Climbing area (crates and balancing equipment)
- Den building area
- Large construction
- Urban waste area (large reels, tubing, cartons)
- Water area (drain pipes, water butt, watering cans, hose pipes)
- Mud kitchen (pots/ pans/ spoons/ measuring jugs)
- Large sand pit (Buckets/ spades/ scoops)
- Listening area (with books, instruments)
- Large small world area (large farm and jungle animals/ dinosaurs/ cars)
- Railing (washing line, weaving, pots and pans)
- Messy tray (with sand, gloop, mood, shaving foam)
- Garden area (a variety of plants and flowers, planting and growing activities)

Inclusive provision:

We provide for differences in children's development and understanding by:

- Differentiated tasks
- Differentiated adult support
- Level of teacher expectation
- Flexible and appropriate group sizing.

We set achievable targets ('next steps') to ensure that **all children** are successful with their learning. The children's 'next steps' are made each half term and shared with parents.

Use of adults:

Due to legal requirements, the adult to child ratio in the foundation setting requires there to be a full time Learning Support Assistant (LSA) working alongside the teacher. But there may also be additional adults, which may include;

- An additional LSA to support children with special educational needs
- Students (i.e. college or university students)
- Parents (to help with baking, reading)

All adults working within the foundation setting are given an induction and booklet with guidelines and expectations that we expect all adults to follow.

PRACTICE

These are essential experiences and areas of activity which are fundamental to early learning and give indications of the ways in which our Aims and Objectives for Learning are delivered in practice.

Learning through play:

Before starting school, children learn through play, by imitating others, by modelling, by reinforcement, by trial and error. Play in a child's early years is essential for development. It provides a valuable 'foundation' to prepare the child for a more formal approach to learning.

We aim to structure play to promote play of quality;

- To help children to learn and develop
- To enrich and widen their experience
- To enable children to explore social situations and work towards a solution to problems
- To make play an enjoyable experience that is shared with other children
- To allow children to extend and act out their imagination
- To learn how to control impulses and understand the importance of rules
- To help children to take risks and make mistakes.

Types of play:

- Imaginative; role play, small world
- Investigative; Sand, water, natural materials, clay
- Creative; art, music
- Constructive; bricks, design and technology
- Mathematical; counting, ordering, sorting
- Problem solving; puzzles, jigsaws

PEDAGOGY

The High/ Scope Approach:

During children's independent learning time we adopt a 'High/scope' approach. This approach follows a 'plan-do-review' system, whereby children are encouraged to:

- Think about and plan what they want to do (Plan)
- Carry out their activity (Do)
- Then discuss what they have done (Review)

The 'High/scope' philosophy helps to promote independence in children, providing them with necessary skills for them to actively learn for themselves. The roles of the adult during high/scope time is to guide, support and encourages the children in their activities, and only intervene when they feel it is appropriate.

Both Foundation settings are organised to cater for High/scope. Area's and resources are labelled (with photographs/ pictures) to ensure that children can access everything without relying on an adult to support them. Children's planning time is supported through the use of a 'planning board'. The planning board refers to all of the areas available to the children in the classroom.

Teaching Approach:

The Early Years curriculum is taught with a structured practical approach. We believe that young children learn best from first hand experiences and therefore strive to provide these wherever possible.

There is a mixture of individual, small group and whole class teaching within the Foundation Stage. A variety of teaching strategies are used to cater the individual needs of all the children.

PARTNERSHIPS

There are three key areas to partnerships:

1. With the children;

Children are encouraged to develop their interests and bring these to classroom situations. For example, sharing a book, using areas of interest to help to settle into class life and to introduce new concepts.

Partnerships are encouraged between children within a class and children within school.

2. With the parents;

Parents are the child's first educators. They can provide a valuable insight into the whole child to support the future assessments made by the teacher and the future learning. Parents are invited to come into school as helpers and educators, in areas which they feel they can contribute after guidance from the teacher.

For example, parents can help with sewing, computer work, play, language and maths games or they can help educate the children about work careers and roles, e.g. bringing a new baby to school.

'Stay and play' mornings and literacy/ numeracy mornings also take place once a week.

This gives the staff, children and parents with an opportunity to share the children's progress and successes.

3. With the staff;

The Foundation Staff meet regularly and interrelate. The Class Teacher share their weekly plans with the School Assistants and Nursery Nurses so that they know the aim and objectives they are assisting. Good relationships are built to inform and support learning.

PROCEDURES

Induction Procedures for starting Foundation 1:

Parents are invited to attend a meeting during the Summer Term before their child starts Nursery. At this meeting, they can choose a time to visit a nursery session with their child.

Home visits take place during the first week of the term that the child is to start Nursery. We have a 'staggered entry' to Nursery to ensure a smooth transition to suit the individual needs and requirements of our pupils.

Induction Procedures for starting Foundation 2:

During the Summer Term the Foundation 1 children that will be attending in September are invited to attend a school meal with parents and carers in the school hall. The children also attend either a morning or afternoon session with the current Foundation 2 class. These sessions will give the children experience in the classroom and also on the playground. Along with the planned sessions there are also whole school events (i.e. Healthy Activities Week) where the Foundation 2 children are also included with activities.

During the Summer Term whenever possible, the Foundation 1 children join the KS1 assembly hall.

Starting School:

For the first week of school the children attend from 8:30 am- 1:00pm, this includes a half-day session with a school meal.

Special Educational Needs

Special Educational Needs are identified as early as possible so the process of help is initiated. They are identified through discussions, observations and assessments.

We adopt and implement a policy of inclusion where opportunities are actively pursued to ensure that all children can benefit from the curriculum that we provide. Where children are identified as needing additional help, it will be provided.

Equal Opportunities

We take care to ensure we promote equality of opportunity. All children are given equal access to all areas of the curriculum and our resources reflect this.

Health and Safety

Our outdoor play area is secure and clearly visible from the Foundation 1 activity area. The Foundation 2 children play on the school main playground during school designated playtimes which are supervised by a teacher. Dinner supervision in this area is provided by midday supervisors. The Foundation 2 children have access to the Outdoor Play Area on a daily basis, under the supervision of the Nursery Assistant or a Learning Support Assistant. Resources; materials and equipment, are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are safe, suitable for purpose and provide access to learning in all areas of the curriculum.

PROGRESS (Assessment and Evaluation)

The Foundation Stage requests the views and insights of parents as the child enters school to inform early assessments.

Observations are carried out daily by all staff. These observations feed directly into our EMAG system. Interest, progress and next steps are reviewed weekly to ensure good and consistent learning is taking place.

Every term, parents are invited into school to look at their child's progress and next steps.

A 'Learning Journey' is produced to record the child's assessments and share achievements. All evidence is dated.