



HERON HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

2026

<i>At the time of publishing the following roles were held:</i>	
Head teacher	Lucy Middleton
Deputy Head Teacher	Michelle Wilkinson
Early Years Lead	Becca Storey
Pastoral Learning Mentor	Hannah Little (appointed Sept 2022)
Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo)	Naomi Jones

Approved by ¹			
Name:	Edward Vittery		
Position:	Chair of Governors		
Signed:			
Date:	09.2025	Version No:	1
Review date ² :	November 2026 (or sooner if there are any statutory changes)		

¹ This document requires approval from either the Governing Body

² This document must be reviewed annually

This page is intentionally blank for printing purposes

Introduction:

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Heron Hill Primary School we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. At Heron Hill Primary School our practice reflects the guidance set out in the 'Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DFE, 2021).

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. 'The majority of children in our EYFS provision join us in our on-site Nursery or have attended a pre-school setting. This means that many have already begun their exposure to the EYFS curriculum. It is the privilege of the staff at Heron Hill Primary School to take on the task of building upon the children's previous experiences. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/carers and all staff work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

Overarching Principles:

The four guiding principles shape the practice in our EYFS department. These are:

- Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong, independent and inquisitive 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/ carer;
- Children join us at varying starting points. They develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

Aims:

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, and ready to face the challenges ahead. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates. We aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs;
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond;
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development, both indoors and outdoors
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress and achieve their full potential.
- Enable choice, decision-making and problem solving, fostering independence and self-confidence;
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions;
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Learning and Development:

The EYFS learning and development requirements comprise:

- The seven areas of learning and development.
- The early learning goals, which summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the Reception year.

- The assessment requirements (when and how the practitioners must assess children's achievements, and when and how they should discuss children's progress with parents and/or carers).
- The three Characteristics of Effective Learning. These help practitioners to reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

There are seven areas of learning and development. They are split into prime and specific areas.

The three prime areas of learning and development are:

Communication and Language

Children will be provided opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves and to speak and listen in a range of situations.

Physical development

Children will be provided with opportunities to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control and movement. Children will also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children will be encouraged to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

The four specific areas of learning and development are:

Literacy

Children will be taught to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children will be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems and other written materials) to ignite their interest. They will be provided with ample opportunities to mark-make and write across the curriculum and learning environment.

Mathematics

Children will be provided with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, space and measures.

Understanding the World

Children will be guided 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.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children will be enabled to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play and design and technology.

Staffing and Organisation:

Heron Hill Primary School has a school Nursery with spaces for 52 children. There are also 2 Reception classes offering a total of 60 spaces. There are teachers and teaching assistants working with the children on a daily basis. There are additional members of staff, as appropriate; to support individual children with specific needs throughout the year. The EYFS department is led by a Phase Leader, who is a member of the school leadership team. All staff have the appropriate qualifications to meet statutory requirements. Appropriate ratios are ensured at times of the day for EYFS pupils including wrap around care and lunch time cover. This enable EYFS children to thrive from the second they enter our school environment. We are always aiming to improve our teaching, skills, knowledge and understanding through training opportunities which comprise of regular PLD sessions, in-class support, observations of colleagues, professional dialogue, and attendance at local network/cluster meetings.

PLD and assessment/moderating happen within school and also across our local authority.

Planning:

Planning builds on and extends what children already know and can do. Our planning puts the principles of the EYFS into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development, and learning. All EYFS staff are committed to working together and are involved in this process. EYFS staff consider the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in their care and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all of the areas of learning and development.

EYFS staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the three prime areas which are the basis for successful learning in the four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capabilities all children need to develop and learn effectively and become ready for school. It is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the prime areas.

Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, teachers will discuss this with the child's parents/carers. Where appropriate, they will make an inclusion referral and the school SENDCO may offer support.

Children in Early Years at Heron Hill will explore and learn via a blend of high-quality adult led inputs and carefully considered continuous and enhanced provision that utilises outdoor environments wherever possible. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. The broad and ambitious curriculum put relationships at the heart of learning, working in partnership with parents, carers and the local community to offer children rich, real-world experiences. Pupils will leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with the academic readiness for KS1 and an eagerness to explore, discover and take risks as curious, independent thinkers.

Assessment, recording and monitoring:

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and professionals to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All professionals who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process (Teachers and Teaching Assistants).

Formative assessment:

This form of assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Staff observe children to understand their stage of development, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. Formative assessment may take the form of formal observations, informal observations, other focused assessments e.g. sound/number, annotated

examples of work, photographs, video and information from parents/carers. Each child has an individual e-Journal in which evidence of learning and experiences are recorded. Evidencing is carefully balanced to ensure that it does not take adults away from time with the children and remains beneficial for staff making judgements around children's progress.

Next steps in learning are identified. Parents/carers are kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development through daily contact with staff and regular meetings. Staff address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents/carers, and any relevant professionals.

In the EYFS we use the Birth to 5 Matters non-statutory guidance which reflects recent research by the profession for ensuring firm foundations for children's futures. This guidance is used to guide the curriculum and make judgements about children's progress. Progress is updated on an on-going basis and Pupil Progress meetings take place termly.

Summative assessment:

The EYFS Profile is used to summarise all of the assessment undertaken and makes statements about the child's achievements in the seven areas of learning at the end of the Reception year. The profile provides parents/carers, and Early Years Practitioners with a summative assessment of a child's attainment against expected levels. Each child's level of development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development or are not yet reaching expected levels (emerging).

Monitoring of Teaching and Learning:

Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out in accordance with school policy. This includes observations of teaching and learning, pupil conferencing, learning walks and e-journal scrutiny. Monitoring is carried out by the Senior Leadership Team and governors.

Learning Through Play:

At Heron Hill Primary School we support children's learning through planned play activities and decide when child initiated or adult-led/guided play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves. Children are given the opportunity to explore and discover within a safe and supportive environment. Play underpins the delivery of the EYFS curriculum. Through play our pupils explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn to think independently and understand the ways to work together with peers as they communicate, investigate and solve problems.

The children are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. Education for children's futures requires supporting children's ability to learn and think for themselves. Through play, staff enable children to take responsibility, face challenge and think flexibly and critically. Supporting children in the Characteristics of Effective Learning, a statutory element of the EYFS, is a central responsibility in early years provision. They learn through being active learners, working with a wide range of resources. "Through play children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. It gives children the opportunity to take risks and make mistakes."

The Learning Environment:

We aim to create a stimulating, inspiring and welcoming learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop in independence.

Enhanced provision is planned for both the inside and outside areas based on half termly topics and children's interests. Continuous provision areas are mapped out across the entire year, detailing resources,

key skills and questions to further learning. This enables practitioners to ensure the areas enable children to progress across their time with us. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

Transition:

We aim to ensure that the children experience a smooth and positive transition as they move from pre-school/home setting to EYFS and then from Reception to Year 1. The aim is for all staff to have:

- A shared understanding of what the principles of the EYFS look like in effective practice.
- Understand and value the EYFS.
- Promote best practice for transition by considering the transition experience of the children and effective transfer of information, including the EYFSP and characteristics of effective learning.
- Use information about children to plan a relevant curriculum.

To support this we provide opportunities for staff to:

- Observe the children in their current groups.
- Take part in moderation of e-journals and writing assessments.
- Discuss each child's individual needs.
- Undertake home visits for new children.
- Hold induction workshops for new children and their parents.
- Have regular slots in the curriculum where children visit their new class.
- Teach across Nursery and Reception to enable Reception teachers to become are familiar faces to our Nursery children.

Working in partnership with Parents and/or Carers:

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and staff work together in early years settings, the results have an extremely positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

We aim to develop this by:

- Having daily face-to-face contact during drop off and collection times.
- Holding a parent workshop for new children and their parent/carer before they start school.
- Meeting and discussing the child with parents/carers at the home visit.
- Providing parent workshops to provide parents with a chance to support their child within school.
- Holding regular parent meetings to provide information, including supporting our parents in the application process for starting their child at a school.
- Providing an Information Booklet for Parents, this booklet provides information required as stated in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Providing a termly curriculum overview informing parents/carers of current learning opportunities.
- Inviting parents/carers to half-termly 'Stay and Play' or craft activity sessions to share learning in EYFS.
- Inviting parents/carers to help in EYFS and, subject to safeguarding procedures, accompany children on school visits.
- Holding two parents' evenings, discussing progress, celebrating success and sharing individual targets.
- Providing an annual written report to parents to celebrate their child's successes

Equal Opportunities:

At Heron Hill Primary we aim to provide all pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, equal access to all aspects of school life and work to ensure that every child is valued fully as an individual.

Staff, as role models, are aware of the influence of adults in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical ideas.

Children with special educational needs will be given support (as appropriate) to enable them to benefit from the curriculum. This includes children that are more able, and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support are also actioned/reviewed, in line with the school's Inclusion Policy. The school's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to key workers and parents/carers, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see the school's Inclusion Policy.

Safeguarding and Welfare requirements:

At Heron Hill Primary School we take the necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework, legal requirements. We also follow the Child protection/safeguarding policy of the school.

- The Designated Safeguarding Leads are displayed around school and staff are fully trained and aware of procedures in this area.
- Risk assessments for the indoor and outdoor environments and particular activities are carried out on a regular basis. All staff are involved in this process.
- Additional risk assessments for the Nursery and Reception are carried out by the Site supervisor.
- It is our policy at Heron Hill Primary to have all personal mobiles turned off whilst supervising children.
- Cameras and iPads are used to record progress and to enable the engagement of parents in their child's learning, parents give permission for this to take place.
- E-journals are developed over the year and information is shared with parents.
- Mobile phones are never used to take photographs of children, staff have school equipment and this is used.
- Once the photographs are uploaded they are removed from the device.
- Consent for photographs is obtained from parents/ carers and stored appropriately.

At Heron Hill Primary we comply with the Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulations of 2018. We use photographs taken with permission on:

- The school website
- Learning eJournals
- School social media feed e.g. Twitter/X

Complaints Procedure:

If a parent has a concern or complaint, school policy will be followed. This is available for reference, from our school website (www.heronhill.cumbria.sch.uk) Any complaints are treated seriously and are investigated.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually, or more regularly in the light of any significant new developments or in response to changes in guidance