



# Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School

## Learning and Teaching Policy

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Chair of governors...*Catherine Burton* .....

Headteacher.....*Natalie Wilson*.....

## Learning and Teaching Policy

Our learning and teaching policy is guided by the Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School (HQFSS) vision statement.

### ***Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School Vision Statement***

*We are a welcoming and inclusive school. Governors, staff and families are committed to working together to provide high quality education and care for young children. We believe every child matters and strive to provide rich experiences that support each child's unique development based on early child principles.*

*Our school is a place where everyone is known, valued and respected.*

- We plan experiences which stimulate children to wonder about the world and to think creatively, led by strengths and their own interests.*
- We share our outstanding practice beyond our school, by supporting professional development.*
- We strive to be a centre of excellence with experienced and knowledgeable staff who are lifelong learners.*
- We offer varied, enticing environments that encourage independent, exploratory learning through play for all children whatever their needs.*
- We have high aspirations for learning and development for all children and their families.*
- Our strong, nurturing key person approach ensures that all children are supported to fulfil their potential.*
- Staff work alongside children and families in order to develop and extend their learning.*

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum is the statutory guidance and curriculum for all children up to the end of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. The EYFS describes the characteristics of effective learning (see Appendix 1) and, at HQFSS, we consider each of these characteristics when planning a wide range of opportunities for children.

EYFS Practice Guidance divides the curriculum into seven areas. There are three prime areas: communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development. There are four specific areas: literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; expressive arts and design. The curriculum areas are organised into broad developmental phases and identify the developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children will need if they are to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the EYFS. All curriculum areas have equal importance; all are planned carefully with a balance of adult-focused, adult-initiated and child-initiated experiences. Development Matters September 2023 describes children's learning and development in three broad pathways: Birth to Three years, Three to Four Years and Reception children.

## **Our approach to children's learning**

We find the following quotation helpful when thinking about children's learning through play:

“Play and playful forms of activity potentially lead towards increasingly complex forms of knowledge, skills and understanding.” ~ Elizabeth Wood

Learning opportunities are planned by staff, building upon children's interests and needs using the updated 2021 EYFS curriculum guidance. We use the following guiding principles in our provision of effective learning and teaching opportunities:

- Children learn to be resilient and strong from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents as well as their key person.
- In their play children learn at their highest level. Through their play children discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates- staff work alongside families to understand the variety of barriers to learning that exist in our community.
- All areas of learning are equally important and interconnected.
- We know that children are learning and making progress when they display certain dispositions and behaviours such as curiosity, motivation, confidence, enjoyment, independence and involvement.

- We work towards developing the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning in all children.
- The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. A rich and varied environment supports children's learning.
- Children learn in a variety of ways: from and with each other, with adults, through their interactions with the environment.
- Children learn both inside and outside, in the nursery garden and Forest school sessions Both environments are equally important, in different ways, in supporting children's learning

### **The role of the adult Practitioner**

Adult Practitioners support children's learning through:

- encouraging independence and autonomy.
- appropriate responses that encourage and extend curiosity, understanding and knowledge.
- building warm, trusting relationships through sensitive observation and evaluation.
- helping children to learn so that they make connections in their knowledge and understanding and are actively supported to grow and develop.
- encouraging children to reflect on their learning.
- a flexible, child-led approach that enables practitioners to respond accurately to individual children's learning and development needs.
- knowledge of child development and the EYFS curriculum.
- supporting and extending children's thinking through conversation where the practitioner might (at different times) **inform, explain, wonder, reflect** or help the child to make connections.
- sensitivity to the individual development of each child to ensure that the learning opportunities they undertake are ambitious for the stage they are learning at and what they are working towards.
- planning supportive and ambitious learning opportunities in all areas of the nursery.
- being mindful of the variety of opportunities that our planned learning environment can offer throughout the day.
- supporting children to initiate their own learning.
- having a regular dialogue with children showing interest, clarifying ideas, asking questions to find out more about what the child is thinking.
- knowing the right time to teach new skills and understanding, and what support is needed to achieve this.
- developing the children's **resilience**, by supporting them to try, sometimes fail and try again.
- modelling creative thinking, practical skills, and positive conversations.

- using opportunities to help children develop **self-regulation**, through scaffolding, conversations, and focused teaching.
- communicating effectively with a child's parents about all aspects of their learning and development.
- Understanding all family's backgrounds and respecting similarities and differences through our resourcing, conversations, and the experiences we offer children.

## **Our approach to planning**

We respond to the development and learning of each child by planning a range of experiences, which include the Prime and Specific areas of learning and the three Characteristics of Effective Learning (see Appendix 1). We are committed to closing the gap, ensuring that no child underachieves. Regular monitoring and evaluation of children's progress enables us to continually adjust our provision in response to any areas of underachievement that may be identified

Planning for the environment is informed by observations of children's interests and learning needs.

Resources are easily accessible and well maintained. Children have opportunities to explore learning in variety of different ways. The organisation of the day allows space and time for children to explore their learning individually, in pairs and in small groups.

Daily adult led 'group times' ensure that every child accesses a broad and balanced curriculum across the Prime and Specific areas of learning.

A consistent routine ensures time for children to have uninterrupted time to explore, repeat, revisit and reflect on their experiences.

The outdoor area is a central feature of the physical learning environment. Outdoor experiences both in school and during Forest school are carefully planned so that children have access to engaging and stimulating experiences.

## **Our approach to assessment**

Assessment plays an important role in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support.

Observations are used to assess children's progress and their learning is tracked. Observations and assessments are used to support the planning for individuals and groups.

Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. We observe children in order to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. These assessments are recorded and then evidenced in each child's 'learning journey' document. Data from these observations inform our planning, provision and is used to report to governors.

Regular meetings with parents and carers both formally and informally secure a working partnership in which information about their child's progress is shared and celebrated. Parents are able to view, comment on and add to their child's 'learning journey' on an ongoing basis. Each child's progress is discussed at regular parents' meetings and a final report is prepared before they start reception.

All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential.

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (Introduction p.7), January 2024

**At Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School we work in partnership with parents and carers to provide:**

**Quality and consistency** in our practice and provision so that every child makes good progress from their starting points.

**A secure foundation** through planning for the learning and development of each unique child, and through assessing and reviewing what they have learned regularly.

**Successful partnership working** between practitioners and parent and /or carers.

**Equality of Opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice** ensuring every child is included and supported to fulfil their potential.

Playing and Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and thinking critically
<p><u>Finding out and exploring</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What areas / activities are they drawn to?</li> <li>• Do they prefer to work in a group / alone?</li> <li>• Do they initiate activities themselves or join in an existing one with a group?</li> <li>• Do they think aloud describing what they do?</li> </ul>	<p><u>Being involved and concentrating</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the children keep focused on a self-initiated activity for a long period of time?</li> <li>• Are they concentrating and involved in the activity without being distracted?</li> <li>• Do they show care with what they're doing?</li> <li>• Do they demonstrate concentration through silence or thinking aloud?</li> </ul>	<p><u>Having their own ideas</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they try something different rather than follow what someone else has done?</li> <li>• Do they address a problem with a strategy?</li> <li>• Retaining independence - not asking for support even if it takes longer to achieve the outcome</li> </ul>
<p><u>Using what they know in their play</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In play do they draw on experiences from home / outside school?</li> <li>• Do they act out situations in the role play area?</li> <li>• Are they confident in finding tools, materials and resources they need for a particular project or idea?</li> </ul>	<p><u>Keeping on trying</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do children show persistence - not giving up even if it means starting again?</li> <li>• Do they ask for help / support if they need it?</li> <li>• Do they discuss solutions for challenges with peers / adults or work things through themselves?</li> </ul>	<p><u>Using what they already know to learn new things</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do they understand patterns and predictability of events?</li> <li>• Talks about / explains how their process links to a previous experience</li> <li>• Do they draw upon knowledge or experiences not immediately related to their activity?</li> </ul>
<p><u>Being willing to have a go</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levels of persistence - do they give up at first hurdle or keep trying?</li> <li>• Are they eager to try new ideas or do they stay with what they are familiar with?</li> <li>• Are they able to talk about / review what they've done if things haven't worked?</li> <li>• Do they work best with continual support or prefer to get on with activities themselves?</li> </ul>	<p><u>Enjoying achieving what they set out to do</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a sense of satisfaction and pride when they have completed an activity; do they want to show / tell people?</li> <li>• Do they relish challenges and continually try to make things better?</li> <li>• Do they evaluate themselves and try different things as a result?</li> <li>• Are they 'intrinsically motivated'- achieving things for themselves as opposed to adult praise?</li> </ul>	<p><u>Choosing ways to do things and finding new ways</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they confident in using a 'trial; and error' approach and talking about why some things do / don't work</li> <li>• Choosing different ways of approaching activities and adapting if it doesn't work</li> </ul>

**Appendix 1: The Characteristics of Effective Learning**