

Aims

At Hopwood Community Primary School, we recognise that the Early Years Foundation Stage is a distinctive and important phase of education. We are committed to providing every child with the best possible start to their education through a safe, nurturing, ambitious and inclusive learning environment.

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice
- Children are safeguarded and their health, safety and wellbeing are promoted.

Legislation

This policy is based on the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers, dated 13 July 2026 and effective from 1 September 2026. The framework is mandatory for school-based early years providers in England. Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Structure of the EYFS

Within the EYFS unit, there are two classes. Each class has a class teacher and 30 pupils. Across the unit, there are three teaching assistants (including 1 TA3 and 1 TA4).

The Four Guiding Principles of the EYFS

Our practice is underpinned by the four guiding principles of the EYFS.

A Unique Child

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

Practitioners:

- develop positive relationships with every child;
- recognise children's individual interests, needs and experiences;
- maintain ambitious expectations for every child;
- identify additional needs promptly;
- celebrate children's individuality, culture, language and achievements.

Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Practitioners:

- provide warm, responsive and consistent interactions;
- model respectful relationships;
- support children to understand and regulate their emotions;
- encourage children to communicate their needs, ideas and feelings;
- work collaboratively with parents and carers.

Enabling Environments

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

Our environment:

- is safe, welcoming and inclusive;
- is organised so that children can make choices and develop independence;
- provides appropriate challenge;
- supports communication, physical development and exploration;
- provides opportunities for learning indoors and outdoors;

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

We recognise that all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Teaching is responsive to children's developmental needs while remaining ambitious about what all children can achieve.

Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. 3 areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

Planning

The EYFS curriculum provides a high quality education, based on quality children's literature (Ruth Miskin) and with Development Matters guidance as a key grounding. Communication and language are foundational to our curriculum and underpin learning across all seven areas. We place particular emphasis on developing children's vocabulary, understanding, speaking and listening, alongside securing the foundational knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics that children need for future learning. The curriculum also includes opportunities to learn about other faiths, religions and the wider world.

Our curriculum is systematic and there is logical progression in knowledge and skills. High quality learning experiences through trips and visitors allow children to make further connections in learning through real life contexts. Characteristics of effective learning are embedded across the EYFS curriculum, ensuring that children have the opportunity to 'play and explore', 'active learning' and 'create and think critically'.

Our staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. Each half term has an overall theme, which is then broken down into two weekly book themes. Each book plan will highlight the rationale of the book, identify how it links to the 7 areas of learning, highlight essential knowledge/skills the children will learn, identify tiered vocabulary staff will use when interacting with children and clearly link to assessment checkpoints. Weekly challenges are planned to allow the opportunity for children to practise and apply skills.

Staff also take into account 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. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Teaching

Read Write Inc is delivered by teachers daily to help children acquire basic skills in reading and writing. Daily maths lessons follow the Power Maths/White Rose structure to ensure children have a solid understanding of number by the end of EYFS. Staff also deliver daily Talk Through Story sessions to extend and deepen children's vocabulary.

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

Children have access to continuous provision both indoors and outdoors.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

Communication and Vocabulary

Communication and language are at the heart of our EYFS curriculum. We recognise that strong early language and communication provide essential foundations for children's learning, relationships, literacy and wider development. We therefore prioritise the systematic development of children's understanding, vocabulary, speaking and listening throughout the curriculum and across the school day.

Practitioners deliberately create language-rich interactions and environments. Adults model accurate and ambitious language, explicitly teach and revisit vocabulary, extend children's responses and provide frequent opportunities for children to listen, understand, talk, explain and engage in purposeful conversation.

SHREC approaches are used to support high-quality adult-child interactions: *Share attention, Respond, Expand, Conversation*. Practitioners use these principles naturally within play, continuous provision, routines and adult-led learning to build sustained interactions and develop children's language.

Blank's Levels of Questioning are used, where appropriate, to support and extend children's understanding of language. Adults consider the level of language and questioning a child can understand and progressively develop children from talking about what is immediately present towards describing, recalling, reasoning, predicting and explaining. This enables practitioners both to scaffold children who need additional support and to provide greater challenge.

Stories, rhymes, songs and high-quality texts are central to our approach. Daily Talk Through Stories sessions provide explicit opportunities to develop and deepen vocabulary, while adults reinforce and encourage children to use newly acquired language throughout provision and in different contexts.

Practitioners:

- model accurate and ambitious language;
- introduce new vocabulary explicitly;
- revisit vocabulary regularly;
- encourage children to use new vocabulary in different contexts;
- use stories, songs, rhymes and conversation to extend children's language;
- support children who require additional communication and language intervention.

Children learning English as an additional language are encouraged to develop their English while their home language and cultural identity are valued.

Foundational Skills and Knowledge

We recognise the importance of securing the foundational knowledge and skills that children need to access future learning successfully. Our curriculum identifies the essential knowledge, vocabulary and skills that we want children to know, understand and be able to do.

Alongside communication and language, particular emphasis is placed on developing secure foundations in early reading, phonics, writing and mathematics, as well as the physical, personal and social skills children need to become increasingly confident and independent learners.

Teaching is carefully sequenced so that children build knowledge and skills over time. Adults provide explicit teaching where appropriate, alongside purposeful opportunities for children to practise, apply and deepen their learning through play and continuous provision. Assessment checkpoints help practitioners identify what children know and can do, recognise gaps and provide timely support.

Assessment

At Hopwood, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers. Checkpoints are used across the year to ensure that children make progress, stop gaps from widening and implement timely support.

Within the first 6 weeks of a child starting Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The RBA is administered in accordance with current Standards and Testing Agency requirements. The purpose of the RBA is not to label or rank individual children, and it is not used as the school's day-to-day assessment of children's learning.

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels of development (emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority upon request.

Working with parents and carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there's a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers. We actively promote an 'open door policy' encouraging parents/carers to interact daily with the EYFS team. All staff members are available at the start and end of the day.

Regular 'Learning Together' sessions and parent meetings are planned across the year and respond to feedback from parents.

Tapestry is used to keep parents/carers informed of their child's learning and experiences. Parents are also encouraged to upload posts.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development. Ongoing assessment and the EYFS Profile provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

Each child is assigned a key person (class teacher) who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We meet the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements and follow the school's safeguarding and child protection procedures to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children can enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We ensure that the appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained to meet children's needs and ensure their safety. In Reception:

- we comply with infant class size legislation and ensure there is at least one school teacher for every 30 pupils.

At least one person with a current full paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present and accompanies children on outings. PFA training is renewed every three years. While children are eating, a member of staff with a current full PFA certificate is always with them.

We promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by talking to children about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

Outdoor access, risk and screen use

Children have daily access to outdoor play unless circumstances make this inappropriate. Risks are identified and managed so that children are not exposed to avoidable harm. The school has regard to current Department for Education guidance on children's screen use in early years settings.

Child absences

Absences are followed up in a timely manner. Where a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period, the school follows its Attendance and safeguarding procedures, contacts parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts, considers patterns of absence and vulnerability, and refers concerns to children's social care and/or requests a police welfare check where appropriate.

Whistleblowing

Appropriate whistleblowing procedures are in place for staff, students and volunteers. Staff are made aware of how to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and how concerns will be handled.

Safeguarding procedures and training

All practitioners are alert to concerns about children's safety and welfare. Staff receive safeguarding training that meets the criteria in Annex C of the EYFS framework; this training is renewed at least every two years, with refresher training considered where needed. Staff induction includes safeguarding, child protection, emergency evacuation and health and safety.

Designated safeguarding lead

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding children, liaises with local statutory children's services and safeguarding partners, and provides ongoing advice, support and guidance to practitioners.

The school's wider safeguarding and welfare arrangements are set out in relevant whole-school policies and procedures, including Child Protection and Safeguarding, Attendance, Whistleblowing, Online Safety, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions/Medicines, Health and Safety, Behaviour and Intimate Care.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Practitioners are alert to children's individual development and identify potential needs at the earliest opportunity.

Where concerns arise:

- practitioners discuss observations with parents or carers;
- the EYFS Lead and SENDCo are involved as appropriate;
- appropriate assessment and support are implemented;
- external professionals may be consulted where required;
- interventions are reviewed regularly.

Children with SEND have access to the full EYFS curriculum with appropriate adaptations, additional support and reasonable adjustments. Expectations remain ambitious for all children.

English as an Additional Language

Children whose home language is not English are supported to participate fully in the curriculum.

Practitioners recognise that speaking more than one language is an asset.

We:

- value and acknowledge children's home languages;
- gather information about children's language development;
- use visual cues, objects, gestures and contextual support;
- explicitly teach vocabulary;
- provide repeated opportunities for purposeful talk;
- maintain high expectations;
- distinguish between learning English as an additional language and possible SEND.

Children are not provided with an unnecessarily simplified curriculum because they are learning English.

Transition

We recognise the importance of well-planned transitions.

Transition into Reception

Before children enter Reception, we aim to:

- gather information from parents and carers;
- liaise with previous early years providers;
- obtain relevant SEND, safeguarding and medical information;
- provide opportunities for children to become familiar with the setting;
- support vulnerable children with additional transition arrangements where appropriate.

Transition into Year 1

Reception and Year 1 staff work collaboratively to ensure continuity.

Information passed to Year 1 includes:

- EYFS Profile outcomes;
- children's strengths and areas for development;
- phonics and reading information;
- SEND information;
- safeguarding information where appropriate;
- relevant information regarding children's learning and wellbeing.

Food, Drink and Safer Eating

Meals, snacks and drinks provided by the school are healthy, balanced and nutritious. The school has regard to the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance, and fresh drinking water is always available and accessible.

Before admission, information is obtained and kept up to date about each child's:

- allergies;
- intolerances;
- special dietary requirements and preferences;
- special health requirements;
- cultural or religious dietary requirements.

This information is shared with all staff involved in preparing, handling and serving food. At each mealtime and snack time, staff are clear who is responsible for checking that the food and drink provided meets each child's requirements.

Known allergies and intolerances are managed through up-to-date allergy action plans developed with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals. Staff are aware of the symptoms and treatment of allergies and anaphylaxis, and the distinction between allergies and intolerances.

Practitioners:

- ensure children are seated safely on appropriately sized chairs while eating;
- remain alert to choking risks, recognising that choking can be silent;
- ensure food is prepared and served safely for each child's individual developmental needs and in a way that reduces choking risk;
- where possible, use a designated eating space, minimise distractions and sit facing children while they eat;
- understand and follow appropriate responses to choking, allergy and anaphylaxis;
- follow individual healthcare and allergy action plans.

Children are always within sight and hearing of a member of staff while eating. A member of staff with a current full PFA certificate is always in the room while children are eating.

Staff maintain ongoing discussions with parents/carers about dietary needs and, where relevant, the textures and developmental stage of food a child can safely manage; assumptions are not made on the basis of age alone.

Toileting and Intimate Care

Children's privacy and dignity are considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs. The setting has an adequate number of toilets and hand basins, with suitable hygienic changing arrangements where needed. Children are supported to become increasingly independent in self-care.

Where children require assistance with toileting or intimate care, staff follow the school's Intimate Care Policy and safeguarding procedures. Having additional toileting or continence needs will not prevent a child from accessing education.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years, or earlier where statutory guidance changes, and approved by Mrs G Duggan.

Signed: G Duggan

Date: September 2026