



Hazelwood Schools

**Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
Policy**

Reviewed and Adopted: **Spring 2025**

Reviewed by: SLT / LTS

Next Review: **Spring 2028**

Review every three years

Our School Vision

At Hazelwood, we believe in nurturing responsible citizens to achieve educational excellence by inspiring awe and wonder through a real, relevant, immersive and purposeful curriculum.

Our Values

Our values are at the heart of all we do.

Our values are: Respect, Resilience, Creativity, Honesty, Ambition, Trust, Kindness, Fairness, Courage, Appreciation & Understanding and Teamwork

Early Years at Hazelwood

At Hazelwood Schools, we believe in nurturing happy and confident children who come to school every day excited to learn, play and explore! We recognise the vital part that the Early Years plays in inspiring awe and wonder of the world, developing friendships, resilience and appreciation of others as well as igniting a love of learning.

We know how important both the Nursery and Reception years are in providing the foundations that enable children to achieve and become successful in life. We welcome children and families into our Hazelwood community with a priority placed upon building relationships that are centred around our children and our core values. We strive to develop and care for our youngest children by responding to their individual needs and interests to ensure all children make progress and thrive.

Our Aims in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- To **build upon the varying experience** children have had at home, nursery or playgroup
- To **lay firm foundations** for the next stage of learning for each unique child; responding to their **individual needs**
- To **nurture positive relationships** that enable children to feel secure and become **confident and independent**
- To **encourage children to take risks** and challenge themselves in their learning
- To **provide stimulating and enabling learning environments** that have open ended opportunities and allow children to **follow their own interests through play**
- To foster strong and supportive **partnerships with parents**

Overarching Principles of the EYFS

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the Early Years Foundation Stage 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** with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time
- Children benefit **from a strong partnership between** practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates

“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 future 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.” *Statutory Framework for the EYFS DfE 2024*

Structure

At Hazelwood Schools, we have a Three-Year Old's Nursery Provision, which offers 30 part time morning places and 30 full time spaces for families entitled to 30 hours funded care. We have three Reception classes, offering a total of 90 places.

EYFS Learning and Development Requirements

At Hazelwood, our Nursery and Reception follow the EYFS Learning and Development requirements as outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework.

The EYFS Framework includes seven areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, three 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 four specific areas:

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

Our Curriculum

Our curriculum is driven by both the key texts we use as well as the children themselves. It is guided by the seven areas of learning and development as well as the educational programmes set out in the EYFS Framework. Our carefully selected key texts enable us to explore many areas of the curriculum. When planning, we look at all seven areas of learning and create purposeful learning opportunities and experiences for our children. We have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills that our children need, in order to support them to progress to their next stage of learning. Our enabling environments support children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. We not only think about the physical environment we create but also the emotional environment, ensuring our children feel safe and secure to learn.

Each unique child has a focus week enabling us to follow their individual interests and build upon learning in the moment. We support teachers by providing "Point in Time" documents and curriculum overviews which outline what we want our children to be able to achieve each term. Furthermore, we provide purposeful learning opportunities in order for children to be able to practice and demonstrate this.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Learning through play

"Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals, and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play and learning that is guided by adults. Practitioners need to decide what they want children in their setting to learn, and the most effective ways to teach it. Practitioners must stimulate children's interests, responding to each child's emerging needs and guiding their development through warm, positive interactions coupled with secure routines for play and learning."
Statutory Framework for the EYFS DfE 2024

Our curriculum is taught through a combination of adult led and structured learning and child-initiated learning. We provide the children with opportunities to choose activities and to learn through play in both the inside and the outside environment, planning activities that develop the children's learning and skills daily.

Role of the adult

We place a high emphasis on providing a language rich environment and value the importance the role the adult has in providing this. The quality interactions adults have with children throughout the day, developing back and forth conversations and echoing back what children say with new vocabulary, are vital. Adults support children in making connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions to move their learning on. We know that this "in the moment" teaching builds children's language effectively and supports progress for all.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Through regular interactions, we will discover children's interests and assess what they know. Also fundamental to our practice, is to assess how children learn and the variety of different rates that they are learning at. The Characteristics of Effective Learning support our practitioners to do this. They are:

- Playing and Learning – children investigate and experience things and events around them and are willing to 'have a go'
- Active Learning – children concentrate and keep trying if they experience difficulties, as well as enjoying what they achieve
- Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, they make links between different experiences and develop strategies for doing things

Direct Teaching

During the day, the children will take part in adult led activities. As children move through the EYFS at Hazelwood, the balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities changes in preparation for the more formal learning in Year One.

In our Nursery, these take the form of very brief carpet sessions or small group sessions relevant to the stage of development of the children, and include opportunities for singing, rhyming, counting and listening to stories.

In our Reception Classes, these will take the form of daily phonics and daily maths carpet sessions and weekly focus group activities. Our teacher led sessions are carefully planned and tailored for the children in the class using previous assessments of the children's knowledge, skills and ability. These sessions are continuously adapted in order to ensure that they are relevant and challenging for every child.

At Hazelwood, we value the importance of developing early reading and early maths skills.

We teach reading through the systematic and synthetic phonics programme *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*. We start teaching the foundations for phonics in the Nursery through:

- sharing high-quality stories and poems
- learning a range of nursery rhymes and action rhymes
- activities that develop focused listening and attention, including oral blending
- attention to high-quality language.

In Reception we follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression, which ensures children build on their growing knowledge of the alphabetic code, mastering phonics to read and spell as they move through school.

Our children's Mathematical ideas are explored through stories and focused around a child's contextual understanding and real-life experiences. We use the White Rose scheme to support our teaching and learning and the key skills of counting, subitising, composition, ordering and comparing are threaded throughout the curriculum, which provides a consistent approach alongside the rest of the school.

We have a strong focus on the five counting principles (stable order, 1:1, cardinal, order of irrelevance and abstract principles). These are introduced in Nursery and embedded in Reception.

In the EYFS, teaching of maths is delivered through whole class and group sessions, carefully planned continuous and enhanced provision, and adult led focus activities.

Assessment and Recording

On-going assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes at Hazelwood Schools. Assessment takes a variety of forms in order to gain in-depth knowledge of each child's level of understanding. In the EYFS we record assessment in the form of observations. This is not an evidence gathering exercise rather an incredibly powerful tool to help us understand a child and their learning journey. Observations help us to improve our provision for our children and help parents understand progress and how to support at home.

Types of observations recorded on Tapestry

Each journal will contain a range of observations:

- **Focus observations** - Detailing adult role and pupil voice (focus week)
- **Snapshot Observation** - short wow moments capturing new independent learning and may contain pupil voice
- **Focus activities** – These are group activities that will include a short context of the activity
- **Whole Class Experiences** – These will give parents information about experiences such as workshops or class visitors
- **Parent contributions** – Parent partnership is very important to us. Parent contributions might include observations and photographs of learning and/or interests at home, comments on observations made by our practitioners, responses to home learning challenges etc
- **Home learning suggestions** –home learning suggestions to support parents continuing learning at home

Other types of information about children's learning and development may be collected in variety of other ways e.g.

- Informal parental conversations
- Information from other professionals
- Practitioner's knowledge about the children

Using all of this gathered information, alongside spending quality time interacting with children, practitioners will make decisions regarding their level of achievement, interests and learning styles.

Statutory Assessment

Assessment at the start of the reception year- the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)

Within the first six weeks that a child starts Reception, practitioners will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). This is a mandatory assessment, which will be undertaken once the children have settled in.

Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

At the end of the EYFS in Reception, practitioners 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 (Expected)
- Not yet reaching expected levels (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.

Monitoring Progress

We also undertake our own baseline assessment for each child and then monitor their learning and development during regular progress meetings throughout the year. This is to ensure that children are making the progress they should so that they are 'On Track' to meet the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception. To support the decisions practitioners, make regarding children's learning the school use a variety of non-statutory guidance in correlation with the 'Point in Time' documents.

Reporting to Parents

Progress is shared with parents/carers during Focus Weeks, at Parent Meetings and in their end of year report.

Partnerships with Parents/Carers and the Wider Community

At Hazelwood, we have a strong sense of community and we always strive to create and maintain positive partnerships with parents and carers. We know that through modelling our shared values and working 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 in numerous ways, e.g. helping with areas of the curriculum they have a keen interest in, providing relevant resources, sharing their culture, job or love of reading with our children. 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 outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

Inclusion

We value each child at Hazelwood and the unique journey they go in throughout their education and lives. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of individual child and supports them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve 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.

Transitions

At Hazelwood we recognise children can be vulnerable at time of change particularly those with additional needs e.g. those with a Special Educational Need (SEN) or a child in care. It is important that all children are prepared for change to enable them to feel secure and settle more easily. The emotions that come with change are successfully navigated by children when their routines and are clear and welcoming.

We prepare children and support parents in a range of way such as;

- Visit nurseries to see children playing in a familiar setting and speak to EYFS practitioners about their learning and development
- Arrange stay and play sessions to enable children to become more familiar with nursery and/or school setting
- Arrange home/school visits for children new to the nursery or school to enable children to meet staff in comfortable environment and staff to share information about child in a secure way
- Parents have the opportunity to complete a starting Nursery/ school booklet with the child's class teacher

- Arrange SEND Transition meeting with Inclusion lead, EYFS lead, parents and all relevant professional involved with the child
- Children attending our Nursery and Reception will take part in fun transition sessions with their new teachers in the summer term. They will be prepared for changes to their routines such as playtimes and where they play as well having opportunity to get to know their new teacher
- Start of the school year in Nursery and Reception is staggered so that the process of change takes place over time
- Time is given for children to settle. All children develop in different ways and rates

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 Year 1 practitioners.

In the final term teachers attend a hand over meeting. Each teacher shares important information about the children with their new class teacher. 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 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Safeguarding and Welfare procedures

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 promote good oral health, as well as good health in general through our curriculum, for example by talking to the children in an age appropriate way about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things and how moderation is best
- The importance of brushing their teeth
- The importance of mental health and well-being
- The importance of E-safety

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	All policies can be found on the school website
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See Hazelwood Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Administering medicines policy	See Hazelwood Schools Medical Policy - Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See Hazelwood Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See Hazelwood Schools Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy See Hazelwood Schools Non-Collection of Children Policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See Hazelwood Schools Complaints Procedure