Harrietsham Church of England Primary School

EYFS Policy

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Responsibility:	EYFS Leader
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School Context:

Harrietsham CEP Vision Statement

We are a warm, welcoming, and inclusive school rooted in our rural community. Like the mustard seed we grew from tiny beginnings and our branches are now spread wide –providing support and taking our values beyond the school gates. All those in our community feel safe and nurtured - able to flourish and grow academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically to achieve their full God-given potential.

"Nurtured we flourish"

We are a nurturing school. As such we believe in, and follow, **The Six Principles of Nurture** in all of our practice.

1. Children's learning is understood developmentally.
2. The classroom offers a safe base.
3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing.
4. Language is a vital means of communication.
5. All behaviour is communication.
6. The importance of transition in children's lives.

Our Values

The roots of our vision are in the parable of the Mustard Seed.

'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches'.
Matthew 13 31-32

In order to grow and reach our potential, everything that we do in school is driven by our vision and underpinned by our core Christian values of:

Love, Fellowship and Forgiveness

The school's vision and values have informed this policy and provide a basis for spiritual and moral development within the school. The learning environment is set up to encourage enquiry, discovery and independence. Our high expectations will enable children to develop spiritually, mentally, physically and creatively. Each pupil is nurtured as a unique individual. However, those working within Early Years ensure that provision is made so that all may flourish without reference to their ability, aptitude, gender, race or faith.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, most children attend a preschool setting. The majority of our children join the Reception class in the September following their fourth birthday.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) seeks to provide:

- **Quality** and **consistency** in all early years settings, so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind.
- A **secure foundation** through learning and development opportunities which are planned around the needs and interests of each individual child and are assessed and reviewed regularly.
- **Partnership** working between practitioners and with parents and/or carers.
- **Equality of opportunity** and anti-discriminatory practice, ensuring that every child is included and supported.

Aims

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children, therefore giving them the strong foundation for their future. We aim to ensure that all our children develop into independent and lifelong learners.

We will ensure that all our children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start in Key Stage 1.

Curriculum

The Reception classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the EYFS document. At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we know that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. Our provision is underpinned by the Department for Education's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, effective from 1 September 2026. We also have regard to Development Matters (Department for Education, updated September 2023) as non-statutory curriculum guidance. These documents inform our curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and provision, alongside the needs, interests and development of the children at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape the educational provision in Early Years Settings. These are divided into prime and specific areas.

The three prime areas are important in developing children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Through the specific areas, the prime areas are strengthened further.

Prime areas;

- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

Specific areas;

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

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other.

All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities.

In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

A Unique Child

Here at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School we have the philosophy that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as Celebration Worship and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive Relationships

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School we understand that children learn to be honest, respectful, compassionate and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children.

We do this through:

- Our Online Learning Journal 'Tapestry', where parents can keep track of their child's learning and progress and can comment/liaise with teachers.
- Staff visiting children in their pre-school setting prior to starting school.
- Staff carrying out "Home Visits" to see the child in their own setting and begin to form a positive relationship with families.
- The children having the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school through taster session visits to the school.
- Parents are invited to attend workshops and presentation evenings in order for them to enhance their children's learning at home and at school.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress and targets through meetings with the parent, child and teacher.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress in term 6.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: weekly Celebration Worship, Christmas Show, Mother's Day and Father's Day treats, Sports Day etc; All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. Adult interactions are guided by SHREC (Share attention, Respond, Expand, Conversation), helping adults to tune in to children, value their communication and extend language and thinking through responsive back-and-forth exchanges.

Enabling Environments

At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. The environment is continually reviewed and developed according to the children's interests, learning needs and progress. Challenging, yet achievable, activities and experiences are offered to extend the children's learning. Due to this, the environment is ever-changing.

There are two classes in Reception - Cygnets Classroom and Ducklings classroom - as well as the shared outdoor space. Children have the opportunity to free flow between all the areas during Explore and Discover Time throughout the week.

The EYFS classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely through continuous provision and learning enhancements. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet

or rest. Each classroom is set up with the learning areas spread across both rooms, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

The EYFS has its own enclosed outdoor area, which has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the chance to explore, use their senses, develop their language and be physically active.

We plan activities and resources for the children to access both indoors and outdoors that help the children to develop in all 7 areas of learning.

Learning and Development

Playing and Exploring

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play, children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development." *Every Child Matters, 2005*.

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. During play and Explore & Discover Time, adults use SHREC to join children sensitively, follow their interests, respond to their ideas, expand language and thinking, and sustain purposeful conversations without taking over the play.

Active Learning

"Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods." *Every Child Matters, 2005.*

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and Thinking Critically

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions." *Every Child Matters, 2005*.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning. SHREC supports these interactions by helping adults share attention, respond meaningfully, expand children's language and ideas, and develop sustained conversations.

Activities in the Reception class fall into three different types;

1. **Child initiated:** where the child makes choices from within the learning environment to meet his/her own outcomes for learning. The teacher supports and extends the play to enable the child to make progress, this is normally in the early stage of a play situation where the children develop a new idea and explore strategies to develop this.

2. **Adult initiated:** experiences where the teacher provides the resources to stimulate and consolidate learning. These experiences may not always require the direct involvement of an adult, but may require the adult to add a new element to the play, or new resource.
3. **Adult directed:** experiences which are planned and supported by the teacher and which aim to meet specific learning outcomes. These activities normally have a literacy or numeracy focus and will be differentiated to meet the children's abilities and needs.

Teaching and Learning Style

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school.

Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication; SHREC is embedded within these interactions so that adults share attention, respond to children's communication, expand vocabulary and ideas, and develop sustained conversations that deepen learning.
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout EYFS;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management; Adults use SHREC consistently to model and extend communication, giving children time to think, respond and develop their ideas through meaningful conversation.
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Planning within the EYFS follows the school's creative curriculum which is based around termly themes. These themes are in response to the needs, interests and achievements of the class and are used as a guide for weekly/daily planning.

On entry to our school, pupils are assessed using the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). The results are used to inform planning/groups and as a starting point for the children.

"Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-today observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share." EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, 2026.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of formal and informal observations. Staff use their in-depth knowledge of the children to assess their progress as well as some Tapestry observations to demonstrate

children using skills independently in provision. Although Tapestry informs judgements made, it is not a complete representation of children's attainment. Observation is woven into responsive interaction rather than separated from it; through SHREC, adults listen and respond in the moment, using what children say and do to inform appropriate next steps while keeping interaction central.

"Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence" EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, 2026.

Every term children's progress is assessed and is recorded. This data is shared with the Head Teacher and is reviewed at Pupil Progress Meetings with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Progress is shared with parents each time an observation is uploaded, meaning that parents are also aware of their child's next steps.

Within the final term of the EYFS, all children are assessed against the 17 Early Learning Goals and this is recorded onto the Early Years Profile. We provide a written summary to parents reporting their progress against the areas of learning and the characteristics of effective learning. At the end of the year, each child's Tapestry Learning Journal is made downloadable for parents to download and keep.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Harrietsham Church of England Primary School are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities. All children and their families are valued within our school and we believe that all our children matter.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their full potential. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In the EYFS, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children.

Child Initiated play is called 'Explore & Discover Time' in order for our children to become self-motivated, independent and responsible learners.

Planning meets the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children with challenging behaviour, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

It is important that children with EAL grow in confidence and hence demonstrate their embedded learning:

- Their environment must reflect their cultural and linguistic heritage.
- Their learning be supported by a wide range of stimuli and experiences.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence.
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs.
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively.
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and

limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of all children. (See Whole School Safeguarding Children Policy).

Welfare

"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." EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, 2026.
At Harrietsham Church of England Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, 2026.

We understand that we are required to:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment are safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of all members of staff working within EYFS, whether teachers or Learning Support to follow the principles stated in this policy.

The Headteacher and Subject Leads will monitor the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Emily Brazier is the school governor responsible for the EYFS.

Governors will monitor EYFS at least three times a year and discuss EYFS practice with the practitioners regularly, providing feedback to the whole governing body, raising any issues that require discussion.