

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



## Lower Halstow and Newington CEP Schools Federation

**‘Respect, Honesty, Kindness,  
Perseverance’**

**‘Welcoming, Forgiving, Generous, Flourishing’**

Approved	Team	Review Date
06.05.14	L&D	Summer 2016
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## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

### **Aim**

At the federation of Lower Halstow and Newington CE Primary School (the federation) we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

*As outlined in the EYFS 'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'*

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers

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

### **Principles into practice**

As part of our practice we:

Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning

Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support

Work in partnership with parents and within the wider community

Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment

Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult led and child-initiated, supported by the adult

Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

### **Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the **prime** areas:

**Communication and Language**

**Physical Development**

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

**Literacy**

**Mathematics**

**Understanding the World**

**Expressive Arts and Design**

Practitioners will focus strongly on the three prime areas within the first term of school as these are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Reception Year in the Federation and grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

A range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences are provided, in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development. This is carried out through a series of themes or topics which are planned using the EYFS documents.

Children have whole group and small group sessions, with times for daily phonics learning using 'Letters and Sounds', teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS.

*'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'*

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

*'Play is fundamental to young children's learning and development. Children learn best when they are actively involved in enjoyable, absorbing and stimulating activities.'*

As adults we need to be aware of how children learn and develop. We know that effective education requires a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements. The most useful learning at the Early Years Foundation Stage arises from play, which allows children to develop understanding and gain confidence in their abilities almost as a by-product of having fun.

Play provides an opportunity for children to come to terms with themselves, their culture and language, other people and the world, and make sense of real-life situations. Play provides opportunities for exploration, investigation, problem solving and for children to practise their skills. It also provides opportunities for them to represent their experiences and use what they have learned in a variety of ways.

A major focus of play is that it needs to be child initiated in order that children can begin to make their own decisions and choose what they do.

Each day the children take part in child-initiated sessions. We have one in the morning and one in the afternoon. These sessions are vital in order to allow the children to begin to make the decisions and take their learning forward. Whilst the planning for these sessions is based upon the children's interests, we also ensure that a balance is provided across the curriculum.

### **Learning through play:**

Is the natural and enjoyable way for young children to learn.

Is an essential and rich part of the learning process.

Allows children to develop, consolidate and apply new skills and ideas, investigate, experiment and solve problems, explore and make sense of the world around them, learn about making choices and decisions and to take risks without fear of failure.

Puts children in charge of their own learning.

Enables children to develop their personal qualities and attitudes, to develop social skills and form relationships.

Takes place both indoors and outdoors.

Within the Federation we believe that play should have a balance between child initiated and teacher led tasks. The teacher led tasks should be well planned and purposeful in order to extend and support learning. It should take place in a well-structured environment with meaningful context. We commit a great deal of time to careful planning to ensure that this takes place.

### **Observation and Assessment**

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own profiles, which are shared with parents throughout the year.

In the final term of the Foundation Stage, practitioners will review their knowledge of each child using information from all sources to make a judgement for each Early Learning Goal. Practitioners must make a judgement from each Early Learning Goal as to whether the child's learning and development is best described by;

- *The child has met the **Expected** level of development*
- *The child is not yet at the expected level and is therefore **Emerging**.*
- *The child is beyond the level of development expected and is therefore **Exceeding**.*

Within the final term of Reception, we provide the parents with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the Characteristics of Learning.

### **Safety**

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. Within the Federation we have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

### **Inclusion**

We value all our children as individuals in the Federation, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the 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.

### **Parents as Partners and the Wider community**

We strive to create and maintain partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that 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 and care in numerous ways –from hearing your child read to sharing family news in our 'Learning Journey' and 'Home Activities' books.

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.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and time given to ensure continuity of learning. 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 playgroups. Children attend introductory sessions to Reception to develop familiarity within the setting and to begin to get to know the Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant. The Head of School and Class Teacher also hold meetings with parents to give them an opportunity to talk freely to staff and for staff to gain more insight into the child's needs and personality, likes and dislikes.

In the final term in Reception, the 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 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.