

# Willingham Primary School



## Early Years Policy October 2017

**Date Ratified:** October 2017

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# Willingham Primary School and Honeypot Pre-School

## Early Years Policy

*“Children develop quickly in the early years, and early years practitioners aim to do all they can to help children have the best possible start in life. Children have a right, spelled out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, to provision which enables them to develop their personalities, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender”*

(Development Matters in the Early years Foundation Stage).

### Introduction

The purpose of this policy statement is to ensure a shared outlook and approach to the teaching of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It should ensure consistency, continuity and coherence throughout the foundation stage. It should also enable new members of staff to have easy access to and understanding of the approach to learning and teaching in Honeypot Pre-School and Foundation Stage in school (often referred to as ‘reception’).

### The Early Years Foundation Stage at Honeypot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year. Willingham Primary School has its own on-site pre-school provision – Honeypot Pre-School. Children may start at Honeypot at two years old and the majority of children remain until they transfer to the Foundation Stage classes within the school building at age four.

### EYFS Principles

Effective practice in the EYFS is built on the following three guided themes.

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling Environments

The above areas all contribute to a child’s learning and development.

### Aims

The Early Years provision within Honeypot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School aims to:

- Develop the whole child and foster the growth of their educational, intellectual, social, emotional, social, physical and language skills.
- Promote an atmosphere of caring in which all children regardless of race, gender, social background or ability, can learn and develop to their full potential.
- Encourage children to be aware of the needs of others, to care and respect each other.
- Promote positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning.

### Objectives:

By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage it is intended that pupils at Willingham Primary School will have developed appropriate skills and attitudes relative to their ability:

- Engagement, motivation, creative and critical thinking skills
- communication and verbal skills
- writing skills
- physical skills
- problem solving skills
- social skills
- creative skills
- mathematical skills
- scientific skills
- technological skills

### Principles for Early Education at Honeypot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School

Practitioners at Honeypot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued. Early Years practice builds on what the children already know and can do, their interests and needs.

No child is excluded or disadvantaged and each child is treated as unique and an individual. Parents and practitioners work closely together with parents as partners.

Honeypot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School work together to identify trends, gaps and to build on prior learning. We share appropriate training and follow the same principles for assessment.

Play is vital in children’s learning. It is their work, a serious pursuit through which they make sense of the world. Learning is most successful when the children are actively involved in first hand experiences both indoors and out. Children’s learning is not divided up into areas. One experience may provide a child with opportunities to develop a number of skills, competences and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Foundation Curriculum in both settings is carefully structured to ensure:

- provision for different starting points, from which the children can develop their learning, building on what they already can do
- relevant and appropriate content that matches and is quickly responsive to the children’s interests and individual needs
- planned and purposeful activities that provide opportunities for teaching and learning both indoors and outdoors which are either planned by adults (adult led) or are those that the children plan or initiate themselves (child initiated).
- children have rich and stimulating experiences and become independent and active learners, we ensure that the learning environment is well planned and well organised
- learning is holistic and for the child and is not compartmentalised under subject headings
- that the potential in all children emerges powerfully under favourable conditions
- that practitioners observe and respond appropriately to children.

### The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is broad, balanced, differentiated, relevant and child centred so that every child has equal access. The Foundation Curriculum is organised into characteristics of effective learning then prime and specific areas of learning:

Characteristics of Effective Learning
<p><b>Playing and exploring – engagement</b></p> <p>Finding out and exploring Playing with what they know Being willing to ‘have a go’</p>
<p><b>Active learning – motivation</b></p> <p>Being involved and concentrating Keeping trying Enjoying achieving what they set out to do</p>
<p><b>Creating and thinking critically – thinking</b></p> <p>Having their own ideas Making links Choosing ways to do things</p>

Area of Learning and Development	Aspect
<b>Prime Areas</b>	
<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b>	Making relationships
	Self-confidence and self-awareness
	Managing feelings and behaviour
<b>Physical Development</b>	Moving and handling
	Health and self-care
<b>Communication and Language</b>	Listening and attention
	Understanding
	Speaking
<b>Specific areas</b>	
<b>Literacy</b>	Reading
	Writing
<b>Mathematics</b>	Numbers
	Shape, space and measure
<b>Understanding the World</b>	People and communities
	The world
	Technology
<b>Expressive Arts and Design</b>	Exploring and using media and materials
	Being imaginative

### Classroom Organisation and Management of Teaching and Learning

Honeypot Pre-School is based in its own purpose built building on the site of Willingham Primary School. It has two learning rooms and a large outdoor area. There are two Early Years Foundation Stage classes in Willingham School which are based in an open plan double classroom where two teachers work in partnership together with trained and experienced EYFS teaching assistants. The enclosed outdoor area is used to develop all areas of learning throughout the year at all times.

A range of strategies are used so that the children are able to acquire the relevant knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. Activities are carefully planned so that the children have the opportunities to explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate.

Children need to be systematically taught so that they are helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward, as well as to reflect on what they have already learnt. Young children learn best in different ways such as through physical activities, creative activities, multimedia, first hand exploration and the classroom environment is always set up to ensure different learning styles are addressed daily.

### **The Learning Environment**

HoneyPot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School ensure that our classrooms and learning areas are lively and inviting and are organised into areas where the children can be active, quiet and can rest. This enables imaginative, lively, messy and investigative play that doesn't necessarily impinge on each other. The learning environment needs to be flexible to meet the changing needs of the children.

The learning environments are organised so that they encourage independence. Resources are clearly labelled so that the children can select and return their own equipment. Materials and equipment are readily available This naturally provides further opportunities for independent learning.

At Willingham Primary School we have the following areas in our reception classroom (both indoors and outdoors): writing area, reading areas, creative table, role-play area, calm, construction area, phonics table, number table, ICT area, finger gym. All areas will provide the opportunity to write/practice number skills/reading.

At HoneyPot Pre-School we provide a base of continuous provision which consists of the following: craft table, malleable resources, block play area, music table, mark making in all areas, role play corner, exploration table, painting, sand and water. These are then enhanced on a daily basis with the children's interests to provide a challenging and stimulating environment.

### **Planning and Assessment**

Willingham Primary School EYFS teachers plan in order to focus on children's interests. Short Term planning is carried out weekly at planning meetings. Outdoor and indoor planning may cover the same objectives but differentiate activities. In both HoneyPot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School, we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all of our children so that they have had all the opportunities needed to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of Foundation Stage. We achieve this by monitoring groups and then planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children who are born in the summer term, children who are from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, children who are disadvantaged and those for whom English is an additional language.

At HoneyPot Pre-School all children are allocated a key person on entry who is responsible for their children's planning. Along with the parent, an initial assessment is completed to gain a starting point along with the child's interests. This information is then used to put next steps in place which are reviewed continuously to ensure all children are making good progress and are on track to reach their full potential. Staff complete a planning sheet which contains the information on each of their children, highlighting activities to support the child in achieving their next steps. Observations are made and recorded, highlighting when next steps have been achieved.

Once the children begin school, regular assessments of the children's learning are made through 'assessment for learning', and this information is used to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is ongoing and an integral part of the learning and development process.

Honeypot Pre-School and Willingham Primary School staff make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles on the 2Simple software. The observations and assessments are used to identify learning priorities and plan the next stage in the learning experiences for the child. The observations are then matched to the early learning objectives/goals and are recorded as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage profile. Parents receive observations of their child monthly, sent by email. Parents are invited to share information by 2Simple by making their own observations or by completing a 'Wow moment' slip. This is a record of a child's significant learning outside the school setting.

Assessment evidence is collected in each child's Learning Journey Folder. This is a folder to show the development of each child's learning throughout the reception year. The folder is divided into 2Simple observations, adult led writing and number activities and child initiated work.

Each class teacher completes assessments in each area of learning from the evidence gathered that term. We aim for a proportion of 80% child initiated learning and 20% adult directed tasks. At the end of the academic year, children in EYFS in school (reception year) are assessed against the Early Learning Goals which are moderated between staff and with practitioners from other settings.

A mid-year report is sent to parents, which provides children's current assessments and a teacher comment. A longer detailed written report is also completed that comments on pupil's characteristics of effective learning and next step targets in the summer term. Learning Journey folders are shared with parents at each termly parents meeting and are taken home at the end of the academic year.

#### **Transition and Admission to Reception**

At Willingham Primary School we recognise that starting school is exciting but can also be a worrying time for both children and parents. We believe that it is important for children to feel secure and valued at all times and to ensure that this happens at all times.

The EYFS leader liaises with the different feeder settings in the summer term to make arrangements for the new intake in September. We work together with each setting so we can begin to get to know the needs of the children, the best groupings, abilities, interests and special needs. School staff visit the children at their different settings.

Induction for the children and parents begins in the Summer Term prior to the children starting school in September. A thorough transition programme takes place with Honeypot Pre-School. The staff meet regularly during the year, and particularly in the summer term. The School and Honeypot Pre-School SENDCOs liaise to ensure a thorough handover of information about children with additional needs. School staff visit the children at Honeypot Pre-School regularly in the summer term in order that they get to know each other.

Parents are invited to a meeting in the summer term where they are given key information about their child starting school, information about routines, reading, writing, number and social skills and other information about school dinners, After School Club, payments, communication etc. Parents also have the opportunity to see how we approach teaching and learning in these areas as well as the philosophy behind play both inside and outside. The parents have the opportunity to meet with key staff at this meeting.

In the summer term prior to starting school the children have the opportunity to spend a sequence of sessions in their Reception Classes with a small group of peers and the current class. New children spend a half day session in school with their new class and teaching staff.

All children begin school full time in September as we believe this helps the children settle into the classroom and school routines. This arrangement is flexible according to the needs of the children.

At the beginning of the Autumn Term the parents sign up for 'meet the teacher' slot. This allows parents to ask questions about their child's first week at school and voice any worries or concerns that they might have about their child. Additionally, this allows the teacher to ask questions to help inform t meet the class teachers for a 'parents meeting'. This is so the teacher can get to know the e baseline assessments of that child. At the end of September, parents are invited to attend a curriculum meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to present and suggest ways in which they can support their child's learning at home.

### **Positive Behaviour**

At Willingham Primary School, it is important that children's behaviour should facilitate and benefit their learning. We believe in the power of positive and frequent praise for good and caring behaviour. Positive reinforcement of good manners, politeness and respect is an important part of developing a respectful and caring environment in which to learn and work in.

### **Special Educational Needs and Intimate Care**

At Willingham Primary School we aim to provide high quality and inclusive provision for children with Special Educational Needs. Children are monitored closely throughout the year and any areas of difficulty are identified and addressed in line with our special needs policy.

Prior to children joining the school from Honeypot, the school SENCo meets with Honeypot staff to discuss all children who have Special Educational Needs and those who need to be monitored closely. The school is provided with all relevant information in order to ensure the best possible start for all children.

For children who need additional, intimate care, staff ensure that an intimate care plan is in place, which is individualised to each child. All staff members adhere to this plan in order to ensure consistency and reassurance for the child as well as safeguarding them.

### **Parents and Carers as Partners**

At Willingham Primary School, it is very important that the staff and parents work together as partners - forming good relationships. We recognise that parents are the first educators of their children and have a wealth of information to share with the school. There needs to be a two way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and teachers.

All parents are made to feel welcome and valued through a range of different opportunities e.g. Mystery readers, workshops, formal and informal meetings, and topic events held at the start and end of topics. We warmly welcome parent helpers in class after October half term, to ensure a smooth settling in period.

Parents are asked to complete 'wow' moments. This a record of significant learning that their child has impressed them with. They also record their own comments on a 'Parent Comment slip' at each parents evening. These then form part of the child's learning journey record.

At the start of each half term and end of each week a link email is sent, informing parents/carers of the topics and areas of the curriculum to be covered and also any other relevant information that may help the parent / carer of the child.

Parents are expected to practise either the children's keywords or read with their child once each day. This should be an enjoyable experience.

Each half term, children are set topic homework to complete. There are often a range of activities to choose from.

**Transition to Year One**

Our aim is that by the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, all children will display the positive characteristics of learning to enable them to be ready for school in Year One. For those children who did not achieve a Good Level of Development, provision in Year One will continue to provide opportunities for the Early Learning goals to be met. EYFS staff liaise carefully with Year One staff, handing over all important information about each child. The EYFS Lead continues to have input to planning and assessment for children in Year One who did not achieve a Good Level of Development.

Year One staff, continue to assess children against the Early Learning Goals where these had not been met in EYFS.

In order to make the transition from the free flow nature of EYFS to the more formalised setting of a classroom, children spend time in their new classroom in the Summer Term. For the first half term at least, Year One classes continue with continuous provision activities so that children are gradually introduced to the expectations of a classroom.