



Teaching and Learning Policy

Review date: September 2023

Next review: September 2024

Rationale

High quality teaching and deep learning are achievable when principled reflective teachers and early childhood educators work in partnership with parents and carers to provide the very best learning and teaching opportunities and experiences.

We recognise that the highest levels of thinking occur when children are engaged in play therefore play remains at the centre of our practice. Teaching and learning is underpinned by the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (2021) that encompasses the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes and personal development.

Our unique curriculum celebrates the great potential of young children, with the goal of nurturing self-motivated, life-long learners. At the core of our approach is the conviction that children are innately talented and motivated investigators, capable – with thoughtful guidance – of sophisticated inquiry across a wide range of subjects.

Our goal is to cultivate the skills that are at the foundation of a life of happiness and success: cooperative and individual problem-solving, analytical thinking, emotional intelligence and empathy, cultural competence – as well as early literacy and math skills and real-world preparation.

Our emergent curriculum is play-based, but far more than "play." It is a series of expertly guided investigations that grow from the children's own interests, which immerse them in the process and joys of real discovery. Research consistently supports that emergent curriculum in early education – emphasising authentic experiences rather than a rigid curriculum – leads to greater levels of information and skills acquisition, increased self-esteem and, ultimately, higher achievement. We have found this approach allows children to consistently exceed the usual educational standards, and to simultaneously develop a robust self-awareness and a joy in learning that will serve them for a lifetime.

Our philosophy is anchored on a strong understanding of child development and human potential. Some of our practice is based on familiar early childhood experiences, like digging in mud and singing songs, while other techniques are reflective of the great research tradition and brain science in our educational community, like mindfulness and thinking protocols. Our approach looks and feels like play, but careful observation highlights the intentional integration of skills and inquiry that makes play the most fruitful opportunity for learning and growth.

Characteristics of high-quality early education include:

- Learning is play-based and takes place indoors and outside
- A balance between adult-initiated experiences (guided learning) and child-initiated experiences
- Adults take children's interests and strengths as a starting point, seeing each child as a competent learner
- Parent involvement is crucial: parent support and a high-quality home learning environment make a huge difference to children
- Practitioners track each child's learning and development to pick up where children are at risk of making poor progress, and adapt the programme and their teaching as appropriate
- Early intervention is offered swiftly, so that children get the additional, specialist help that they need

We believe that high quality learning and teaching is the entitlement of all children. This must equip them with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices. We acknowledge that children learn at different rates and each is at an individual stage of development. We believe that children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning. Effective teaching and learning in the EYFS meets children's identified needs and interests and helps children to learn and develop in all seven areas of learning and development.

To achieve this, our curriculum is built around a series of enquiries or projects that grow out of the children's authentic interests. They are playful – combining the power of the children's boundless curiosity with an expertly guided investigative approach that immerses the children in the process and joys of real discovery. We want to prompt children to consider and wonder about the world around them, using the provocation of “**I Wonder...**” Projects might last a few hours, a few days, or even a few months. At Hirst Wood Nursery School children have time to explore their interests, to pursue questions, create theories and extend knowledge. Project work allows children to play around with ideas in a concrete way that matches their developmental and intellectual abilities. Children come together in groups to work on projects, building collaborative problem-solving skills as they share ideas and knowledge.

Our approach to learning is grounded in a great respect for the child, and a dedication to research driven practice. Every decision holds us to the highest standard of creating the optimal conditions for children to learn. From the smallest details, such as ensuring a media-free centre and providing nutrient rich food to allowing children to connect with nature daily and ensuring hands-on learning, our practice is rooted in what we value as fundamental rights of children to the best education possible.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to support a rich, interesting and stimulating learning and teaching environment, an environment that allows children to fully develop their skills and abilities. The objective of this policy is to establish a consistent approach to high quality learning and teaching which inspires all children and enables them to become confident and engaged learners.

We want this policy to:

- Foster a collaborative and positive atmosphere that supports and promotes children's self-esteem.
- Build confident communicators
- Support children's development in all areas of the EYFS
- To support every child as an individual and expand their metacognitive skills so they view themselves as a highly successful learner
- Help every child to grow up feeling confident about their own identity, in a spirit of friendship, understanding fairness and the rights of others, valuing diversity, and ready to be a British citizen.

At Hirst Wood Nursery School children are learning from interesting provocations, thoughtful questions and rich problem solving in the same way that artists, scientists, mathematicians, writers, and engineers learn in the world. We are guided by the following:

- ✓ Informed by research
- ✓ Highly accomplished teachers and colleagues
- ✓ Parents as Partners
- ✓ Committed to communication
- ✓ An inviting facility with natural, real life resources based on what is familiar to children
- ✓ A curiosity curriculum with a well-resourced range of artefacts and items to stimulate interest and investigation

Every child will have opportunity to participate in

- ✓ A free flow environment that supports confidence, independence and decision making
- ✓ A range of cultural experiences
- ✓ An outstanding learning environment focused on natural and real resources and materials
- ✓ A constructivist curriculum approach where each child creates their own learning journey with adults who are interested partners who scaffold and extending knowledge and understanding
- ✓ Visitors to school
- ✓ Community based events

Children will also have the opportunity to enjoy one or more of our curriculum enrichment opportunities such as

- ✓ Yoga
- ✓ Forest School
- ✓ Dough disco
- ✓ Sensory Explorers
- ✓ Gardening Club
- ✓ Music and Movement
- ✓ All Aboard language development group
- ✓ Fundamental Foundations language support

Intent, implementation and impact:

We aim to:

- Provide a range of high quality inclusive, accessible and integrated services that will make a difference and improve outcomes for families.
- Create an environment that is safe, warm and welcoming where children are happy and everyone is treated with respect and dignity.
- Provide a stimulating environment that offers opportunities for challenge appropriate for each child's development socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.
- Ensure that staff know children well and use this knowledge to assess, develop and extend each child.
- Plan a rich, broad and balanced play-based curriculum founded on an understanding of children's development and learning in general and on the needs of individual children in particular.
- Encourage children to be self-motivated, independent and confident and involved in their chosen activities and learning.
- Ensure the well-being of all our staff, children, families and governors.
- Give children the time and opportunity to experiment, have fun, be creative and imaginative, discover, take risks, make mistakes, consolidate and reflect.
- Build relationships with parents and carers and foster their active involvement in their children's learning and progress.
- Ensure a smooth transition from home to school and school to school.
- Foster equality of opportunity by developing an environment that is inclusive of all its community.
- Provide opportunities for all staff to have high quality training and development.
- Build links with local schools, early year's providers and the wider community.
- Develop a love of learning and cultural capital which we believe is about giving children the best possible start to their education and future success.

Environment/classrooms

Activities and experiences are arranged to promote independence. Opportunity is given by adults for children to play co-operatively, alone, or time is given for children to stand and observe. There must be time and space allowed to develop play both inside and outside, safely and securely. The environment is aesthetically appealing with lots of examples of children's current work included in child centred displays. Displays include examples of children's speech where possible and appropriate and give children opportunities to talk about, review and think about their previous experiences and learning (metacognition). Clear behavioural expectations and guidelines promote positive behaviour. Challenging social situations are seen as opportunities for growth and development, explaining and working with children to help them feel strong and safe, and to learn how to manage difficult issues and conflicts in appropriate ways.

We aim for high quality teaching and learning in order to improve outcomes for all children. We are particularly keen to promote children's lifelong learning. In order to achieve this aim each of the following elements need to be included:

1. Interaction - learning and teaching experiences are reviewed by children and adults to inform and improve future experiences.

Adults will:

- Listen to children, allowing them time to respond.
- Model a positive attitude to learning.
- Celebrate learning in as many ways as possible.
- Provide opportunities to develop children's self-confidence, positive self-image, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and an enthusiastic attitude to learning.
- Model a range of positive behaviours.
- Use rich language that is grammatically correct.
- Sensitively recast children's mistakes in their spoken language
- Use conversation and effective questioning in order that sustained shared thinking takes place.
- Place equal value on verbal and non-verbal forms of communication (gesture, signing, visuals)
- Use a variety of teaching strategies and styles as developmentally appropriate to teach particular skills.
- Interact with, and support, children in such a way that positively affects their attitude to learning.
- Talk with children about what they are learning, what they have learned & what they would like to learn next.
- Help children to develop an understanding of what learning is and view themselves positively in this context.
- Act upon and value children's contributions.

We will encourage children to:

- Enjoy learning.
- Listen to other people's points of view.
- Have the confidence to express their opinion.
- Take responsibility.
- Talk about their learning.
- Return to activities over time to review and extend their learning.
- Contribute to planning through our observations and evaluations.
- Ask the best questions
- Think critically
- Use enquiry-based approaches
- Collaborate to achieve
- Problems solve
- Build confidence and resilience
- View themselves as positive, confident and independent learners

2. We value the key role that parents/carers and the wider family play in encouraging children's learning, self-confidence and sense of wellbeing through home learning and development of the parent/carer's role.

Adults will:

- Acknowledge and respect parent/carers role as children's first and most enduring educators by working in open partnership; encouraging their involvement and participation and supporting their developing understanding of children's learning.
- Establish effective partnership with parents/carers in all aspects of the learning process.
- Encourage relationships with parents/carers based on trust and mutual respect.
- Share open access to classrooms, information and records, in a variety of ways.
- Make effective use of the knowledge and expertise of parents, carers and other family members, to support children's learning.
- Facilitate partnerships between parents by encouraging a sense of community from within the school.
- Encourage parents to comment on and contribute through EYLog system
- Be a support between parents and outside agencies.
- Be flexible and responsive in our attempts to meet individual families' needs within our school community.
- Understand the importance of providing a wide, rich set of experiences
- Work with children, parents and carers to prepare children for life in modern Britain, and be respectful, responsible active citizens who contribute positively to society.

3. Ensure that the learning that takes place is developmentally appropriate and inclusive.

Adults will:

- Be knowledgeable about child development in all areas of the curriculum.
- Provide relevant and appropriate learning opportunities that match the different levels of young children's learning and developmental needs.
- Acknowledge and celebrate different families' particular religious and cultural beliefs.
- Acknowledge and build on children's interests.
- Value children's previous experiences, interests and achievements using them as a starting point for children's learning.
- Recognise and value children's individual learning styles.
- Work within the Code of Practice for children with Special Educational Needs and within the Children Act 1989/2004 for 'children in need'.
- Work within the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years (2015).

We will encourage children to:

- Express their interests.
- Learn at their own pace.
- Experience appropriate challenges.
- Feel confident and valued for their religious and cultural beliefs.
- Enjoy opportunities to learn through their individual learning styles.
- Utilise opportunities to use their senses, through exploration, investigations, listening, watching, playing and taking risks.
- Learn from their mistakes, reflect and revise

4. Establish planning and assessment procedures to ensure we offer young children a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum which reflects children's predictable, spontaneous and current interests.

Adults will:

- Ensure that our curriculum intent and implementation are embedded securely and consistently across the school
- Make provision for different starting points from which children develop their learning.
- Contribute to short, medium- and long-term curriculum planning with colleagues that meets curriculum requirements for the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage - Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five
- Plan high quality learning and teaching experiences for each day with a specific learning focus, which target children using both an objective led and needs led approach.
- Plan for some adults to be deployed in an area or activity and others to be in a more flexible role – supporting child-initiated learning.
- Meet the needs of *more able* and *less able* children as appropriate, ensuring that we always consider the most disadvantaged children and those pupils with SEND.
- Prepare and present accurate and effective on-going reports of children.
- Maintain a stimulating learning environment ensuring continuity and progression in children's learning.
- Use rigorous observation and assessment procedures to plan for and extend children's learning.
- Engage in training that aims to standardise our assessment judgements to ensure parity of decisions
- Share with parents and carers observations, photographs and videos through EYLog system on a regular basis
- Share with parents and carers the assessment data for their child that highlights both formative and summative progress on a termly basis, with accompanying explanations of the different ranges and what they mean
- Hold communication calls each term for parents to discuss their child's progress
- Produce a written report and summative assessment profile for each child when they transition to a new setting

We will encourage children to:

- Experience a range of learning opportunities.
- Have sufficient time to experience preferred learning opportunities.
- Have the confidence to approach new learning experiences independently or with the support and encouragement of an adult or peer.
- Apply their existing knowledge to new and varied contexts

Our inclusive approach

Inclusive practice aims to minimise or remove any potential barriers to learning to facilitate the engagement of all children. The design and delivery of a curriculum can, unintentionally present a range of barriers to learning that could affect some children more than others, and this can result in individuals being unfairly disadvantaged. Through our inclusive curriculum design and delivery, we are proud to provide a highly inclusive environment for all children that meets the varied needs of learners and aims to ensure that all children have equal access to developmentally appropriate learning opportunities.

Inclusive practice means:

- Being versatile and flexible to the abilities, interests and learning styles of all children
- Ensuring consistency and accessibility for all, from their individual starting points and developmental levels

- Working collaboratively with children, parents, colleagues and other professionals to ensure equality of opportunity
- Encouraging personalisation of the curriculum through observation, interpretation and in the moment planning
- Embracing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Please refer to our Policy for Inclusion, September 2023 for further information.

5. Recognise the crucial part the physical environment plays in teaching & learning.

Adults will:

- Create an environment that is safe, warm and welcoming so that children and their carers will feel at ease.
- Provide a safe, stimulating, multi-sensory environment both indoors and out, to inspire and motivate children.
- Ensure that the environment is clean, accessible and well organised.
- Provide a familiar environment through continuous provision to enable children to gain confidence and independence to plan their own learning.
- Develop and adapt the environment to enhance teaching and learning informed by review and evaluation.
- Use interactive displays to support teaching and learning e.g. to inform, to extend and to celebrate learning and events, to interest children and parents.
- Make use of learning opportunities provided by the local and wider environment.
- Provide an environment that celebrates and values children's learning.
- Promote independence through the accessibility, organisation and presentation of resources.

We will encourage children to:

- Behave consistently well, demonstrating increasing levels of self-control, self-regulation strategies and develop a positive attitude towards their education.
- Take time to explore all aspects of the environment, displaying care and concern for others and the resources that are available.
- Use the environment independently when selecting & replacing resources.
- Contribute to the cleanliness and tidiness of the environment, developing their collaborative responsibility for caring for our resources and maintaining health and safety.
- Develop an awareness of and contribution to the maintenance of the learning environments and associated resources
- Provide contributions to displays, collections etc. with narrations of children's thoughts and ideas
- Access an environment through which we will promote shared care and pride in the organisation of resources.
- Demonstrate high levels of involvement in their chosen experiences.
- Work in partnership with adults in sustained shared thinking to deepen and extend their existing knowledge and understanding
- Be confident, independent learners, viewing themselves positively through metacognitive strategies