



AIM high, GROW within and REACH beyond the stars ★

Early Years Policy



Hollyfast Primary School

Written: January 2023

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Introduction

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and 5 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 learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.'

**Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage- Published 31st March 2021,
Effective 1st September 2021**

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. At Hollyfast Primary School, we believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. The children start our school in Pre-school in the September following their third birthday or in Reception, in the year following their fourth birthday. We greatly value the importance that the Early Years plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

Aims

- To give each child a happy and positive start to their school life, enabling each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, physically, intellectually, and emotionally.
- To provide each child with a growing understanding our school vision and values and how they can be used to build and manage relationships as well as foster a deep love of learning.

Our Early Years Vision

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From their very first day at Hollyfast, we strive for children feel a sense of belonging, within their class and our school. Rooted in *kindness* and *respect*, this sense of belonging will nurture the children into confident and happy learners and friends. Our school vision and values will encourage children to '**Aim high, grow within, and reach beyond the stars**'. In the Early Years, we will always strive for excellence. By fostering curiosity and building and encouraging independence, we will teach children the importance of '**dreaming big**', '**keeping going**' and **making 'brave' choices**. This will support them in **pushing limits** and **achieving and attaining their very best, all of the time**. As well as academic progress, we will also aim for the children in our Early Years to recognise and **value their personal growth** and achievements, alongside the growth and achievements of others. Through our curriculum, we will build links to the world we live in, encouraging children to recognise, value and celebrate the diversity of each other, our school, and our city, resulting is a powerful understanding of the importance of **collaboration, kindness, respect, and togetherness** in the world we live in.

Our core Values are: -



Our Curriculum

Statutory Requirements

Our Reception provision follows the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, a copy of which can be found here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS framework - March 2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf)

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected:

The prime areas are.

- **Communication and Language** – Listening, Attention and Understanding, and Speaking
- **Physical Development** – Gross Motor Skills and Fine Motor Skills
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – Self-regulation, Managing Self, Building Relationships

The specific areas are;

- **Literacy** – Comprehension, Word Reading, Writing
- **Mathematics** – Number and Numerical Patterns
- **Understanding the World** – Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities and the Natural World
- **Expressive Arts and Design** – Creating with Materials and Being Imaginative and Expressive

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Reception also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. The teachers plan activities within the reception classrooms with these in mind. They highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are.

- **Playing and Exploring** – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The Hollyfast Curriculum Approach

In Hollyfast EYFS, we encourage children to **discover** a passion for learning. Therefore, in Reception we weave a **captivating** and memorable learning journey based on both key learning areas and the children's interests.

We have used a range of research and resources to break down the end of year Early Learning Goals into small steps in progression, considering the context, abilities, and experiences of the children on arrival to our school. These small step progressions are taught through adult-led teaching sessions, group times, 1:1 teaching and through our wider environment learning.

Phonics teaching starts following the 'Reception' transition period, once children are in full time they begin phonics sessions. Phonics in Reception and Year 1 is taught using the ELS Phonics and Reading scheme. This is taught through steady pace and progression, whole class teaching and consistent daily phonics practice. As part of the phonics sessions, the children also learn correct letter formation building up to writing short sentences. To further embed and reinforce their phonics learning, the guided reading sessions are taught using books from the ELS Phonics and Reading scheme.

For Reading, we encourage and enable children to read stories every day. We read an array of high-quality, captivating, and exciting books that are a range of text types and from a variety of authors. These books help enrich children's vocabulary and encourage a love of words and reading for pleasure. Home reading books are sent home each week in line with their phonics knowledge, enabling children practise and apply sounds they know. In Reception, children also participate in whole class reading regularly throughout the week, listening, discussing, and discovering books together.

For writing children take part in 'Drawing Club' daily. Drawing Club uses a range of texts including traditional tales, classic stories, new stories, and animation. Through this hook of 'Drawing Club' children are given the opportunity to develop their vocabulary, fine motor and pencil control, letter formation, phonics skills to record simple words, phrases and sentences. Drawing Club involves teachers modelling and thinking out loud strategies, constructing sentences, segmenting words, transcription of sentences and checking sentences. Within provision children are given the opportunity to explore different text types including letters, instructions, postcards, recipes and stories.

For Maths, we teach a broad and balanced diet that includes number, shape, space, measure and numerical patterns. These are built on in both our adult led teaching sessions, small group work and within our wider learning environment. Within maths, we follow the White Rose Maths Scheme of Learning ensuring that children are immersed in all areas of maths throughout their year. Maths concepts taught within group times are made available in the wider learning environment to enable children to discover and develop their knowledge and skills further.

Pedagogical Approaches

Learning through play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years approach. We believe children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Where appropriate, we use children's interests as a starting point and we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences (indoor and outdoor) in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through sustained shared thinking- observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play.

Adult-led direct teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult-led experiences for children in the form of structured adult led teaching and adult- led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills, vocabulary and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning has been understood and taken on. Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place; however, this can be flexible to support the children's needs and extend their learning.

Each day, the children take part in adult-led small group sessions for Phonics, Maths and Literacy and the wider curriculum. The length of these sessions increases across the year, in line with child development and increased stamina and concentration.

Assessment

On entry to Pre-school, staff complete a school-based baseline assessment. On entry to Reception, staff complete the National Reception Baseline Assessment Framework to secure a base line judgement across early literacy, communication, language and mathematics skills. In addition to this, teachers use initial observations to secure baselines across physical development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, enabling teachers to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children across the first half term. This first assessment also takes into account any other records we receive from previous Nursery settings, parents and childminders.

Staff formally assess children every term, using school-generated progression and milestone documents for each of the 7 areas. These progression documents support teachers in the assessment of the cohort at specific points within the year (on entry, end of autumn, end of spring and end of the academic year). Teachers complete milestone assessments each term which is evidenced in children's Mark Making and Maths learning books and a class 'Floor Book'. These milestone assessments have been generated from the progression documents which build skills to support children staying on track to achieve Early Learning Goals (ELG). We analyse these results and plan activities to address 'gaps in learning'. Early years teachers have the opportunity to meet SLT every half term to discuss pupil progress and to identify children making rapid or limited progress. In addition, staff meet to discuss individual 'spotlight' children. They use observations gathered from group and independent learning across 2/3 days. This helps to build a picture of the 'whole' child as they move through the Early Years classroom encountering different rooms, resources and adults. These observations are then used to address any support, extensions or develop interests of individual children.

The EYFS team continually assess children informally, meeting once a week to discuss as a staff team progress specific children have made and areas for development for specific children identified. Through informal discussion, teaching staff identify children needing support or additional input in the coming week.

How evidence is recorded

At our school, each child has their own Mark Making and Maths book. These record children's individual and adult led learning through photographs, written recordings and children's comments. The class Floor Book contains evidence of the whole class's learning journey capturing 'WOW' and 'Special day' moments along with all areas of the Curriculum. Evidence is collected across the term on a class display board making this record of learning instant, accessible and relevant to the children. At the end of each term this is then collated into a large 'Floor Book'. This is then used as a reference point to previous learning with the children to recall previous learning 'Remember when we learned about...?'

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as Reception visit days with their new teacher, we offer all new children to Hollyfast Primary School a home visit to develop these home/school links as well as a visit to children in their Nursery settings. We have a staggered entry into Reception to provide a smoother transition experience. This staggered approach also parents to support settling their child into the new school environment and build positive relationships with the EYFS team.

All of our parents in Reception are given the opportunity to attend a presentation and meet the teacher session prior to starting with us. Here, we offer parents information about our setting whilst also providing a learning pack to support children at home! We also run regular Parent workshops throughout the year- from coffee mornings where Parents enjoy learning alongside their children in class to parent workshops which may provide information of key curriculum areas and how they can support their child at home. Parents are also always invited in to take part in our 'Purposeful Projects'.

Parents are also invited to attend a Parents' Meeting (Teacher Learning Conferences) each term where parents, the teacher and the child can discuss learning, progress and wellbeing. During these meeting, parents are also invited to visit the classroom and look through their child's learning journals, celebrating their child's achievements and reflecting on learning.

Parents also have contact with Teachers via the SeeSaw App. The Seesaw App enable parents to see videos of learning in school, post learning at home for teachers to share in and complete home tasks that may be set by teachers. These home learning tasks on Seesaw support our transition offers prior to children starting in September allowing them to become familiar with their teacher.

Parents receive an annual written report that offers comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in the Summer Term and send them to parents before the end of the school year.