



Early Years Policy September 2017

Academy Vision and Mission Statement

Learning and improving together without limits.

Our core mission is to provide excellent learning opportunities and experiences to ensure that we support and challenge all children in succeeding.

AIMS OF HOLMBUSH PRIMARY ACADEMY

At Holmbush Primary Academy we aim for:

High Expectations

Outstanding and creative learning journeys

Learning through challenge and excitement

Making the most of partnerships with parents and the community

Building on progress

Understanding the needs and achievements of everyone

Safe and secure environment

Introduction

The early years of a child's life are crucial to their development as individuals and to successful future learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Holmbush Primary Academy we have a Nursery Class (Little Learners) and a Reception Class.

Aims of the EYFS

We believe The Foundation Stage is a unique phase in a child's life and is crucial to successful future learning. Through this policy we aim to ensure a consistent approach where parents, carers, teachers and practitioners work together to give children the best possible start.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to all children from birth to the end of the Reception year. This statutory framework sets standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well; and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children are ready for school; and stimulates the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the foundation for good future progress through school and life. At Holmbush Primary Academy we have a Nursery class (Little Learners) and a Reception class and all children work within this framework

It details four key principles which shape our practice;

A Unique Child
Positive Relationships
Enabling Environments
Learning and Development

A Unique Child:-

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We understand that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates and join us on their own learning path. All children are included and valued equally.

Settling in and Transition

In our pre-school we offer "Settling in Sessions" where children get to know their Key Person, explore the new environment and meet other children. Parents share important information around needs, interests and routines. This is achieved both through discussion and completing a starting nursery questionnaire during the home visit.

In a similar way transitions between age phases are carefully planned, supported with social and photograph stories and enhanced to meet individual needs. This transition programme is provided for children who enter our Reception class from all settings including Little Learners. This consists of a home visit with starting school questionnaire, a play afternoon and a visit to all pre-school settings to see children in their familiar environments.

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage/Special Educational Needs and Disability

All children and their families are valued at Holmbush Primary Academy. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their full potential and planning is in response to the observed needs of all groups and abilities.

Assessments take into account contributions from a range of perspectives to ensure that any child with potential special educational needs is identified at the earliest possible opportunity. Early identification of special needs is crucial to enable staff to support the development of each child.

Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage and further support can be accessed through the Nursery SENCO and the Inclusion Manager.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children so that they make good progress from their starting points. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, 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. In order to accommodate the individual's particular learning needs provision will be

planned wherever possible in a multi-sensory way so that the various experiences can be accessed by all in the spirit of inclusion.

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.

Pupil Premium

We ensure that we quickly identify children who are entitled to both Pupil Premium and Early Years Pupil Premium. Through baseline assessment we ascertain in which areas children are attaining and how we can further support through resources, expertise or intervention. Progress is rigorously monitored and tracked.

Safeguarding and 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."

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

At Holmbush Primary Academy all children have the right to feel and be safe. The safety of our children is paramount. We encourage the children to take risks in a safe learning environment by helping them to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children.

Within the Early Years we ensure that our current practice and provision complies with the welfare requirements as stated in the Ofsted Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage.

Our team works collaboratively to;

- Promote the welfare and safeguarding 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.

See University of Brighton Academies Trust B9: Safeguarding Children in Education and Child Protection Policy and Procedure.

Prevent Duty

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act (2015) places a duty on all schools 'to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. We aim to build children's resilience to extremism by promoting their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and by actively promoting fundamental British Values.

All of our staff undertake accredited on-line Prevent Training, providing them with an understanding of the general risks affecting young children, how to identify individual children who may be at risk and how to support them. Our procedures for protecting children are set out in our existing safeguarding policy.

See University of Brighton Academies Trust B3: Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

Positive Relationships:-

At Holmbush Primary Academy we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Families are given clear guidance on the staff they will meet and their role in the setting.

Key Persons

To enable children to make secure attachments to practitioners and to develop positive relationships, we operate a Key Person system in Little Learners and in Reception, the Class Teacher takes on this role. This allows practitioners to ensure strong relationships with high quality communication and support throughout the Early Years Unit.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents and carers 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 encourage parents through:

- Comprehensive settling in and transition programmes including drop in sessions at transition points
- Arranging a range of activities such as 'Learning Share Afternoon' each half term and 'Learning Together' sessions to encourage collaboration
- Formal meetings for parents/carers three times a year at which the Class Teacher/Key Person and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress in the final year of Nursery and the end of Reception.
- Providing home visits where the teacher, parents/carers and child can meet before they start school

- Having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents/carers to become settled and allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- Providing parents/carers an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing a 'Learning Journey Overview' which inform planning and provision;
- By being available at the beginning and end of the school day to enable parents/carers to discuss any concerns between children, the academy and parents/carers;
- Encouraging parents/carers to attend workshops around the curriculum and supporting at home;
- Sharing curriculum activities on Class Dojo that cover aspects that we will teach during that term, offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents/carers;
- Regular updates through Class Dojo and sharing their child's progress on Target Tracker Link.

Free flow

We operate a free flow approach which includes indoor and outdoor spaces and when possible across the age phases. In this way children can access a range of self-directed challenges alongside structured adult led learning experiences. Learning spaces are clearly defined and resources are easily accessible so that children can develop as independent learners by following their own schemas and fascinations.

We recognise the importance of open ended experiences to promote purposeful and challenging play. Practitioners observe and extend this play as appropriate, use inspiring language to promote Sustained Shared Thinking. They further use these observations to enhance provision and extend individual learning.

Learning and Development:-

We recognise that children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At Holbush Primary Academy we understand that young

children achieve well when learning is engaging and well matched to their interests and previous learning.

Learning is often play based with increasing challenge and expectations as a child develops.

Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development of which three are "prime areas," and four "specific areas."

The prime areas are

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development.

The specific areas are

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

The Prime Areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in Specific Areas of Learning.

Curriculum Mapping is in place to promote a wide ranging curriculum where children are challenged with new experiences. It is made up of a range of broad themes called Learning Journeys. These are often linked to seasonal changes whilst being flexible to respond to observed needs and current interests.

Our medium-term planning identifies intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working beyond the Early Learning Goals.

We promote Characteristics of Effective Learning where children develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role in their learning and think creatively. We observe and monitor progress with these skills and report these to parents.

Assessment

"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"

Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

The Early Years Outcomes bands and Early Learning Goals provide the basis for assessment throughout the Foundation Stage. Children are quickly assessed at their entry point to the Foundation Stage to establish a baseline. Progress is monitored and tracked consistently through observations and an electronic tracking system used throughout the school.

Practitioners, teachers and teaching assistants make regular assessments of children's learning and these high quality observations are key to the assessment and planning cycle. Next Steps are planned in response to these, shared with parents, then presented on a 'Next Steps' display so all practitioners have an awareness of ways forward.

There are several summative assessment points throughout the Foundation Stage at Holmbush Primary Academy.

- Children entering Reception will be assessed by the teacher through play activities and observations to get a baseline of their attainment during the first half term and this will be recorded on Target Tracker.
- Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress in the final year of Nursery and the end of Reception.

See Holmbush Primary Academy Assessment for Learning Policy

Letters and Sounds

Listening and attention skills are developed right from the beginning of the Foundation Stage. Later Phase 1 of the Letters and Sounds Phonic Programme begins in the nursery. This is a daily programme of interactive experiences that promote phonological awareness and key skills for reading and spelling. Further phases continue throughout the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1

Home Learning

At Holmbush Primary Academy, we understand the impact of high quality liaison between home and school and strive to ensure that our pupils are keen to learn at every opportunity. We believe this is best achieved through regular reading and maths fluency tasks. All reading and fluency practice should be recorded in the reading and maths cards.

British Values

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs are embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage. We actively seek to promote these values through modelling behaviour, challenging stereotypes and ensuring that our children receive a rich and varied curriculum.

When appropriate at Holmbush Primary Academy we demonstrate democracy in action, and support the decisions that children make and ensure they are given opportunities to develop enquiring minds in an atmosphere where questions are valued. We provide opportunities for children to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and increase their confidence in their own abilities

We allow children to explore the language of feelings and responsibility, reflect on their differences and understand we are free to have different opinions.

Monitoring

The monitoring of Early Years provision is the responsibility of all Leaders of Learning, to ensure consistency across all classes and staff and that our high expectations are being met. The Senior Leadership Team and Academic Partner will also monitor, in accordance with the Academy Improvement Plan. Monitoring can take the form of lesson observations, drop-ins, sampling and moderation of work, data analysis, speaking with children and parents and looking at teachers' planning.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the EYFS Leader.