



Hazel Cottage
School

Part of
OptionsAutism

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Policy Number	<i>1.0</i>
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Owner	Mark Montgomery – Headteacher

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Hazel Cottage School is a small, independent school catering for children and young people with autism aged 4 – 11 who may have a range of additional needs.

At Hazel Cottage the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is for children who are in Reception.

EYFS Curriculum Intent statement

Our aim is to provide our children with an engaging, exciting, empowering and memorable curriculum that equips them for today and tomorrow. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

EYFS curriculum Intent

A practical, playful approach to learning, based on the needs and interests of our children, is delivered mainly through topic-based planning. We teach children individually, in small groups, in class bases and in whole cohorts. Through a combination of teacher input and continuous provision opportunities, learning is planned to encourage children to develop their learning independently through exploration and challenge.

The “Characteristics of Effective Learning” are at the heart of the Early Years Curriculum and explore the different ways in which children learn. They highlight the importance of playing and learning, active learning and thinking critically. All the learning experiences we plan for the children allow them to utilise and develop these skills. Our learning environments, both inside and outside, are stimulating and exciting, and relevant to the needs and age/stage of our children. Natural backing and resources promote a calm atmosphere conducive to learning, whilst easily accessible resources develop children’s ability to access the curriculum independently.

We endeavour to ensure that children *“Learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.”* We aim to support children in their learning *“to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”* (Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2023)

- To experience partnership and continuity with home and school.
- To provide a happy, stable and caring environment
- To feel secure within a relaxed learning environment and sensitive atmosphere of the Early Years setting.
- To provide a stimulating and challenging environment with opportunities for exploration and discovery.
- To encourage every pupil to attain their full potential.

- To provide opportunities for all pupils to participate in all activities.
- To establish patterns of learning for the future.
- To establish self-discipline and encourage good behaviour patterns.
- To establish self-esteem.
- To educate the pupils in all aspects of life.

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is an individual learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration assemblies and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

EYFS curriculum implementation

The EYFS is based on seven key features of effective practice as set out in Development Matters 2020.

1. The best for every child
2. High-quality care
3. The curriculum: what we want children to learn
4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn
5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt
6. Self-regulation and executive function
7. Partnership with parents Children in our Early Years Phase (Reception and Year 1) follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (EYFS).

The EYFS Curriculum has seven main areas of learning and development of which three are “prime areas,” and four are “specific areas.”

The prime areas are:

Communication and Language

We believe that our pupils’ communication skills are the most important building block on their learning journey. We work in partnership with the Speech and Language Team to ensure every child is maximising their communication potential.

At Hazel Cottage School we use a total communication strategy including Objects of Reference, Intensive Interaction, the Picture Exchange Communication system (PECS), communication boards, Makaton, and Visual Aids. As our children make progress with their communication skills they engage in structured speech and language activities. The pupil’s progress is monitored closely and reviewed by Speech and Language Therapists throughout the year in collaboration with the teacher and other members of the classroom team.

Physical Development

Fine Motor skills - We develop our pupils’ fine motor skills throughout the day through play and self-help activities. Pupils have additional support from our Occupational Therapist. The programs we use include: Disco Dough (manipulating play dough to music) and Write Dance (drawing to music and story). We also encourage mark making using a variety of different medium, e.g. shaving foam, cornflour and sand.

Gross Motor Skills - Our gross motor skills program includes: swimming, soft play sessions, Sensory Integration and Rebound Therapy for targeted children. Other activities include cycling, outside play, dance, ball skills, games and apparatus.

Personal, Social and Emotional development.

We provide a calm, structured and consistent environment that is essential for all our pupils. All children follow or have access to visual or written timetables depending upon their ability to help with their understanding of time and transitions. All our pupils have a EHCP targets which are specific to developing their personal, social and emotional skills. We work to develop turn taking and sharing through structured play. Some of our pupils may need a Positive Behaviour/ Self-Regulation Plan to ensure their safety and the safety of others. This is shared with adults who work with that child and parents to ensure a consistent approach. These are reviewed and updated termly. Some of our children have Personal Care Plans to address toileting needs. These are also discussed with parents and progress monitored and reviewed regularly.

The specific areas are:

Literacy

At Hazel Cottage School we use 'Little Wandle – Letters and Sounds' to teach phonics starting with environmental sound recognition activities of phase 1 in our early years class. Big Cat Phonics is used to provide a structured approach to reading, supplemented with non-reading scheme books relevant to the pupils' interests and reading level. Targeted pupils have the opportunity to participate in 1:1 work for phonics and literacy as appropriate. Emergent writing is encouraged throughout the curriculum.

Mathematics

Throughout the EYFS pupils participate in practical, fun and multi-sensory maths activities both indoors and outdoors. Mathematical skills are encouraged throughout the entire curriculum.

Understanding of the World

The children in experience a range of educational visits into the community on a weekly basis, either on a bus or on foot for a walk. We enjoy exploring local parks and library. We visit supermarkets and walk to the local shops. We also visit the local fire station, police station and hospital to help develop an understanding of people who help us in the community.

Expressive Arts and Design

Our children are encouraged to mark make, paint, draw, cut and stick and manipulate materials across the day. We love to explore sound through music and dance.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals.

Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.

Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.

Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued at Hazel Cottage School. Children are treated as individuals and have equal access to all provisions available. All children are encouraged to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all groups and abilities.

Welfare

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. "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."

At Hazel Cottage School we understand that we are legally required to comply with certain welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2023. We understand that we are required 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 is safe and suitable for purpose.
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Positive Relationships

At Hazel Cottage we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents 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 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. Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible. 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.

We also do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school (Transition visits, Open Mornings and Parents Evenings)
- The children have the opportunity to attend carefully planned transition visits before joining the school. This is also to support staff and parents in getting to know each other as well as the children.
- Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher or key worker if there are any concerns. There is a more formal parents evening three times a year (each term) when the staff team including key worker and the parents discuss the child's progress.
- Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents: stay and play sessions, celebration assemblies and school visits.
- Providing parents an opportunity to celebrate their child's learning and development by completing "wow" moments which inform planning and provision;
- Written contact through a home school diary / Class Dojo as well as the acknowledgement that parents can ring school to contact members of the class team and key worker.
- Ensuring all parents know who their child's teacher and teaching assistants are as well as their key worker prior to starting school.
- Each child has an Early Years Review (6 monthly) which parents are invited to discuss their child's achievements and progress and to contribute to the setting of Annual Review Targets.
- Parents receive an annual end of year report at the end of each Summer Term detailing the work covered by each child and the attainment specific to their son/daughter.
- Individual Learning Plans are shared termly on Dojo with a list of possible activities for parents to work on at home, as well as other homework opportunities.

Enabling Environments

We aim to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment where children feel confident and secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision. Effective learning builds and extends upon prior learning and following children's interest. Effective planning is informed by observations of the children to ensure we follow their current interests and experiences. These observations are recorded in the children's individual learning journey folders. Play based learning is paramount and children direct their own learning from carefully planned opportunities provided by staff. Staff will enhance play and extend as needed to further individual learning.

Learning and Development and Organisation

Teachers and teaching assistants provide the curriculum in the EYFS up to a class size of 6 children. Depending on the individual needs of the children Year 1 and Year 2 children may learn alongside our EYFS pupils.

Through careful assessments and observations, including information provided by parents and other settings, children's development levels are assessed. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. Through the structured areas of the Early Years Curriculum each pupil has access to a full range of sensory, exploratory and early learning experiences. The structured programmes within each area enable each pupil's individual abilities and levels of development to be carefully monitored, assessed and specific needs to be prioritised.

Planning

It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher, which is monitored by the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher to oversee the planning, the delivery of a well-balanced curriculum and to set individual pupil targets on a termly basis appropriate to the needs, ability and age of the pupils. Planning and guided children's activities will reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable them to develop and learn effectively across all areas of their learning, as well as offering them opportunities to develop their cultural capital. When children first start, their first term has a focus strong on the 3 prime areas.

At Hazel Cottage School we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These 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

(Taken from Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2023)

Homework

In the Early Years parents and carers are encouraged to play with their children at home. All parents have the opportunity to communicate with their key person through the home school diary, Class Dojo or Talking buttons leaving and recording messages of activities they have done to share with staff and their peers. At the beginning of each term we also share the medium term planning and individual learning plans on Class Dojo, so that parents can work on these at home. Class Dojo is used to send interactive homework to children as well as activities linking to their Individualised Learning Plan.

Transition from nursery

During the summer term prior to a child's entry into the Reception year, the following procedures have been put into place to ensure successful transition,

- Parents are invited to visit the school and look around the EYFS provision with a member of SLT to ensure they know about school procedures and discuss any concerns they may want to express.
- During the summer term both nursery and home visits will be carried out. This is an opportunity to gain a good understanding of the child's likes and dislikes and answer any concerns or questions parents may have about their child starting Hazel Cottage School. Parents are encouraged to complete an "all about me" booklet. It is used during the autumn term to support transition and to inform planning.
- Some Reception pupils starting at Hazel Cottage School may participate in a part time transition period depending on the individual needs of the pupils which would be agreed with parents and the Local Authority. This enables baseline assessments, and key worker to gain a greater understanding of the child's individual needs and create a positive relationship with them.

From EYFS Class to Key Stage 1

During the final term in Reception a EYFS Profile is completed for each child. The Profile provides parents and carers, staff and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress, during the EYFS and their readiness to move through school. The Profile includes on-going observation, all relevant records held by the EYFS class, discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

Each child's level of development is assessed against the early learning goals. The profile indicates whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or if they are exceeding expected levels, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report together with a transition sheet on each child's skills, abilities and needs. This informs the dialogue between Reception and Year 1 teachers about each child's stage of development and learning needs and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities are an integral part of the Early Years Curriculum addressing multi-cultural aspects wherever relevant.

Teaching British Values

What are British Values?

We teach British Values in the early years by incorporating the following values:

- Individual liberty
- The rule of law
- Democracy
- Mutual respect
- Tolerance for others

‘Britishness’ can describe qualities such as showing mutual respect, kindness and a tolerance for others. These are cornerstone qualities that are instilled in our teaching. We incorporate these into all of the above activities – from encouraging open discussion on topics between ourselves and our pupils through to sharing activities and show and tell.

At Hazel Cottage School we ensure to celebrate all festivals and cultural celebrations, particularly British. We also celebrate by having a British Values week in the summer term as a whole school. We also try to include this in meals and ensure that the children eat a variety of foods from around the world. Our topic-based approach to learning allows us to learn and experience different and varying clothes, foods, music, celebrations and traditions. We also have special days based on different festivals, occasions and religions. We take the pupils on community visits, walks and trips to get out and about in both the local and wider community – from visiting farms, feeding the ducks, visiting supermarkets or going to the park. With our older children we try to explain why we do different things and the importance of British values when working on “all about me / ourselves”. Other activities that we do daily include promoting good manners, kindness and respect to the children.

EYFS Curriculum Impact

Assessment and Recording

At Hazel Cottage School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles and then can set next steps. We record our observations in a variety of ways, through ‘wow moments’ and using the ‘Evidence for Learning’. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place on a regular basis. Children’s achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which are shared with parents. Every term parents are invited to attend a parents evening.

We make regular assessments of children’s learning and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. The children’s progress is reviewed continually. This is shared with parents. Throughout their time in EYFS, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their

children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher meetings.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts Reception, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) using the adapted and modified resources for SEND children. If we feel that this is not appropriate for a particular child, we do have the option to disable them. Parents are informed of the baseline prior to it being started.

On-going assessment through teacher/TA observation and daily/weekly recording of pupils' work informs evaluation of the individual learning plans and future target setting.

The EYFS team will use the information contained in the termly assessments with regard to pupil's achievements and progress to inform the Annual Review process, Development Matters and reporting to parents.

In the Summer term, we provide the parent's with a report based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with the class teacher in preparation for Year 1.

Record of Achievement

Each child has an individual 'Learning Journey' which includes evidence of all their learning and achievements (photographs / activities), parent comments and contributions and observations completed by key persons that will form the end of year report to parents. We also record observations and progress using Evidence for Learning.



Early Years Foundation Stage – Three Year Topic Cycle

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Year 1 - Topics	All about me	Winter Wonderland	Minibeasts	Once Upon a time...	Pirates	Holidays
Year 2 – Topics	It is good to be me!	Space	Transport	Magic World	Heroes	At the seaside
Year 3 – Topics	Ourselves	Dinosaurs	Animals	Spring	People who help us	Journeys

Amended Topic Cycle – Jan 2024 to July 2025

Jan 2024 to July 2024	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
Topic	All about me	Spring	People who help us	Journeys

Topics will continue to be reviewed and adapted based on the needs and interests of the pupils.