

HIGHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

**GUIDE TO THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE
AND ASSESSMENT**

OCTOBER 2011

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

A guide for parents and carers

What is the EYFS?

- The EYFS is a stage of children's development from birth to the end of their first year (Reception) year in school.
- The EYFS Framework describes how early years practitioners should work with children and their families to support their development and learning.
- It describes how your child should be kept safe and cared for and how all concerned can make sure that your child achieves the most that they can in their earliest years of life.
- It is based on four important principles.

What are the EYFS principles?

Theme: A Unique Child

Principle: Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Theme: Positive Relationships

Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Theme: Enabling Environments

Principle: The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Theme: Learning and Development

Principle: Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and interconnected.

What are Early Learning Goals?

The EYFS determines the early learning goals. The early learning goals (ELGs) are the knowledge, skills and understanding that children should have acquired by the academic year in which they reach the age of 5 (Reception).

The 6 areas of learning covered by the early learning goals are

- Personal, social and emotional development (PSE) This includes areas such as self care skills, attitudes towards new events, relationships with others, confidence, behaviour and self control.
- Communication, language and literacy (CLL) This includes areas such as speaking, listening, reading and the enjoyment of books, phonics and writing.
- Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy (PSRN) This includes areas such as counting, number recognition, calculating, shape work, money, quantities etc.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world (KUW) This includes exploring and investigating, awareness of the world around them, designing and making, computer and technology skills, awareness of time and awareness of the different communities that exist.

- Physical development (PD) This includes personal movement and awareness of space, using equipment and materials and health and bodily awareness.
- Creative development (CD) This includes exploring all forms of creative media, creating music and dance, developing imagination and imaginative play and responding to experiences, expressing and communicating ideas.

None of these areas of Learning and Development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas are delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Assessing in the EYFS

Staff are continually assessing pupils to determine what they are capable of doing and what they need to do next to help them develop further. Observations in children's individual profiles are 'levelled' so that staff can see, at a glance, where a child is at a specific moment. The Levels contain a code which links to the areas of learning, shown above. These observations act as evidence to support our judgements at the end of the year.

At the end of the year each child's level of development is recorded against the 13 assessment scales derived from the early learning goals.

Personal, social and emotional development is split into 3 scales - Dispositions and attitudes, social development and emotional development.

Communication, language and literacy is split into 4 scales - Language for communication and thinking, linking sounds to letters, reading and writing.

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy is split into 3 scales - Numbers as labels and for counting, shape, space and measures and calculating.

The other 3 scales are Physical development, Knowledge and understanding of the world and Creative development.

Each scale is split into 9 criteria.

By the end of the year in Reception most children will have achieved 6 of the 9 criteria in some, or all, of the scales. The child is said to be working at the expected level for his / her age.

Some children will have achieved more than 6 points in some, or all, of the scales. The child is said to be working beyond the expected level for his / her age.

Some children will have achieved less than 6 points in some, or all, of the scales. The child is said to be working towards the expected level for his / her age.

This information will be shown on your child's end of year report.

How can I help at home?

Helping your child with reading

Reading with your child is vital. Research shows that it's the single most important thing you can do to help your child's education. It's best to read little and often, so try to put aside some time for it every day. Think of ways to make reading fun - you want your child to learn how pleasurable books can be. If you're both enjoying talking about the content of a particular page, linger over it for as long as you like. Books aren't just about reading the words on the page; they can also present new ideas and topics for you and your child to discuss.

Tips for helping your child to enjoy books:

- Encourage your child to pretend to 'read' a book before he or she can read words.
- Visit the library as often as possible - take out CDs and DVDs as well as books.
- Schedule a regular time for reading - perhaps when you get home from school or just before bed.
- Buy dual-language books if English isn't your family's first language - you can talk about books and stories, and develop a love for them, in any language.
- Look for books on topics that you know your child is interested in - maybe dragons, insects, cookery or a certain sport.
- Make sure that children's books are easily accessible in different rooms around your house.

Helping your child with writing

Writing is a vital means of communication. Everyday life provides many opportunities to practise this important skill.

- Shopping lists
- Thank you letters
- Diaries
- Postcards
- E-mail
- Greetings cards
- Stories and poems
- Spelling practice

Daily phonics practise will help with learning to read and write.

Helping your child with maths

As with reading and writing, try to make maths as much fun as possible - games, puzzles and jigsaws are a great way to start. It's also important to show how we use maths skills in our everyday lives and to involve your child in this. Identifying problems and solving them can also help your child develop maths skills. If you see him or her puzzling over something, talk about the problem and try to work out the solution together. Don't shy away from maths if you didn't like it at school. Try to find new ways to enjoy the subject with your child.

Tips for helping your child to enjoy maths:

- Point out the different shapes to be found around your home and the local environment
- Take your child shopping and talk about the quantities and prices of anything you buy.
- Let your child handle money and work out how much things cost.
- Look together for numbers on street signs and car registration plates.
- Baking
- Telling the time