

**HIGHFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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

# 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) 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 unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

#### Theme: Positive Relationships

Principle: Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

#### Theme: Enabling Environments

Principle: Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents / carers.

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

The 7 areas of learning covered by the early learning goals are split into 'Prime areas' and 'Specific areas'. The prime areas are crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The specific areas teach specific knowledge and skills.

#### Prime Areas

- 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 and language (CL) This includes areas such as speaking, listening and attending to others, understanding and responding.
- Physical development (PD) This includes personal movement and awareness of space, developing coordination and control, using equipment and materials and health and bodily awareness.

### **Specific Areas**

- Literacy (L) This includes reading, enjoyment of books, phonics and writing
- Mathematics (M) This includes areas such as counting, number recognition, calculating, shape work, money, quantities etc.
- Understanding of the world (UW) This includes exploring and investigating, awareness of the world around them, computer and technology skills, awareness of time and awareness of the different communities that exist.
- Expressive arts and design (EAD) This includes exploring all forms of creative media, designing and building, 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, and then a colour to indicate the age band working within. The age bands are 0-11 months, 8-20 months, 16-26 months, 22-36 months, 30-50 months, 40-60 months and ELGs. The 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 assessed against the early learning goals - They are assessed as Emerging (working towards the ELG), Expected (achieved the ELG) or Exceeding (working beyond the ELG). This information will be shown on your child's end of year report.

Communication and language is split into 3 Early Learning Goals based around listening and attention, understanding and speaking.

Physical development is split into 2 Early Learning Goals based around moving and handling and health and self care.

Personal, social and emotional development is split into 3 Early Learning Goals based around self confidence and self awareness, managing feelings and behaviour and making relationships.

Literacy is split into 2 Early Learning Goals based around reading and writing.

Mathematics is split into 2 Early Learning Goals based around numbers and shape, space and measures.

Understanding of the world is split into 3 Early Learning Goals based around people and communities, the world and technology.

Expressive arts and design is split into 2 Early Learning Goals based around exploring and using media and materials and being imaginative.

## 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