

# Headington Quarry Foundation Stage School

## Learning and Teaching Policy

Our vision statement at HQFSS states:

“We are a welcoming and inclusive school. Governors, staff and families are committed to working together to provide high quality education and care for children aged three to five years. We believe every child matters and strive to provide rich experiences that support each child’s unique development.

Our school is special because:

- Each child is known, valued and respected.
- Wide ranging services and events help build friendships and relationships within the Headington community.
- Staff are lifelong learners, dedicated to children’s learning and are open to new ideas.
- Planned experiences provoke children to wonder about the world and to think imaginatively.
- Varied, enticing environments encourage independent, exploratory learning through play.
- Experienced, knowledgeable staff observe children closely in order to support their personal interests and needs.”

### Children’s learning

We believe that...

- children learn to be resilient and strong from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents as well as their key person.
- parents are a child’s first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together the results have a positive impact on children’s development and learning.
- in their play children learn at their highest level. Through their play children discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things.
- children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates; all areas of learning are equally important and interconnected.
- we know that children are learning and making progress when they display certain dispositions and behaviours such as curiosity, motivation, confidence, enjoyment, independence and involvement.
- We work towards developing the Characteristics of Learning in all children (Appendix 1)

- the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s development and learning. A rich and varied environment supports children’s learning.
- children learn in a variety of ways: from and with each other, with adults, through their interactions with the environment.
- children learn both inside and outside, in the nursery garden. Both environments are equally important, in different ways, in supporting children’s learning.

### The curriculum

EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) is the statutory guidance and curriculum for all children up to the end of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday.

EYFS Practice Guidance divides the curriculum into seven areas:

#### Prime areas

Communication and Language	Physical Development	Personal, Social and Emotional Development
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#### Specific areas

Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the world	Expressive Arts and Design
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The curriculum areas are organised into broad developmental phases and identify the developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children will need if they are to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the EYFS.

All curriculum areas have equal importance; all are planned carefully with a balance of adult-focused, adult-initiated and child-initiated experiences.

We find the following quotation helpful when thinking about children’s play:

*“Child initiated play “:*

*The action of a child choosing to extend, repeat or explore an activity. This activity may or may not have been introduced or prompted by an adult. It is the child’s innovation within or of the activity which is important and relevant to child initiation. An adult may be present and may be supportive but not directive. For an example an adult may be supporting the child to realise an idea by providing necessary resources, or by engaging in thought provoking conversation. Child initiated activity and exploration provides an important insight into the depth of a child ‘s learning.*

*When learning is fully mastered the child is able and motivated to employ that learning unprompted.”*                      *2013 Early Years Foundation Stage Profile*

Learning opportunities are planned by staff building upon children’s interests and needs using the EYFS curriculum guidance.

### The role of the adult

Practitioners support children’s learning through:

- warm, trusting relationships
- sensitive observation and evaluation
- appropriate responses that encourage and extend curiosity and learning
- helping children to learn so that they make connections in their learning, are actively led forward and can reflect on their learning
- a flexible, child led approach that enables practitioners to respond easily to individual children’s learning and development needs
- knowledge of child development and the EYFS curriculum
- supporting and extending children’s thinking through conversation where the practitioner might (at different times) inform, explain, wonder, reflect or help the child to make connections
- sensitivity to the individual development of each child to ensure that the activities they undertake are suitable for the stage they have reached
- planning learning opportunities and resourcing appropriately, in all areas of the nursery, inside and out
- making different types of environments available to children so that, if children want, they can rest, watch, be physically active, make noise and so on
- supporting children to initiate their own learning
- showing genuine interest, clarifying ideas, asking questions to find out more about what the child is thinking
- knowing each child really well; this means that we are better able to judge the right time to support and teach new skills and understanding. We judge when to ‘step in’ and offer support and when to wait and let the child try...and sometimes fail.
- modelling e.g. creative thinking, practical skills, how to have conversations
- moderation of assessments with staff team
- valuing the processes that children go through in their learning, rather than simply the end product
- encouraging independence and autonomy

### Continuing professional development

We are committed to professional training and development. We achieve this through:

- staff meetings
- training
- staff appraisal (including video observations)
- individual reading to keep up with pedagogical developments
- visits to other schools and settings in order to share good practice

### Monitoring of learning and teaching

We assess and evaluate our observations of staff to ensure that we have an accurate knowledge of our strengths and areas for development , both for individuals and the staff team as a whole.

We do this by:

- peer observation
- video observation and evaluation
- observation forms for different purposes: appraisal, monitoring by Headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators
- Developing links with schools and settings and using the opportunity to articulate and explain our ethos to other professionals

Date of review: Spring 2016

Chair of governors:

Date for next review: Spring 2018



