



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Introduction

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives.

Learning for children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practice, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through play and talk.

As outlined in the 'Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage':

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.'

For our children at Southampton Hospital School (SHS), their lives may have been adversely affected by a period of ill health, chronic health condition or major medical event. This may have created obstacles and challenges within their development, including missed periods of education. At SHS we believe that we can work to remove and reduce these barriers, and to help children meet their potential, even during challenging times in their lives.

The EYFS aims:

- To provide the highest quality care and education for all our children
- To ensure a safe and motivating environment enabling children to learn
- To value the individual child and work alongside parents to help every child reach their full potential.
- To provide a strong foundation for future learning.

We adhere to the 'Statutory Framework of the EYFS' and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates.

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven Areas of Learning, using play as the vehicle for learning wherever possible;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- Work in partnership with parents, carers, home schools and medical staff
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment and by the children's own ideas and interests;
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated, child-initiated and adult supported;
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and outdoors as much as we are able to within the context of a hospital setting

Early years foundation stage curriculum

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on the Educational Programmes set out in the EYFS and our observations of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. This enables children to develop the knowledge and skills to be prepared for KS1. All seven areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

The prime areas are fundamental to a broad and balanced base of learning for children and are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive, both in the EYFS and into Key Stage 1.

The **prime** areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

1. **Playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
2. **Active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties.
3. **Creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

We aim to provide children with a range of experiences and opportunities within the parameters of our setting, in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

Planning in the EYFS

The EYFS curriculum is organised into the areas specified above. Each area has its own map which identify statements for what your child will be learning and the sequence for progression. These statements will be informed by the statutory Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as set out in the EYFS framework and the non-statutory guidance found in Development Matters and Birth to Five Matters. Your child will complete cycles of learning which meet the criteria on the maps, all of which are informed by the Hospital School's metacognitive approach to teaching and learning.

We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses. Our planning is continually evaluated by all staff to ensure that children's individual 'Next Steps in Learning' and personalised learning needs are met allowing for progress to be made.

Where possible, interaction with other peers is encouraged, although these may well be older children. Even so, this allows for opportunities for play and interaction, developing social and language skills. Much of the teaching for EYFS will be 1:1 or very small groups, and staff are mindful to ensure that there is a balance of teacher-led and child-led activities, as well as opportunities for developing independence.

The curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS framework: *'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'*.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those which are planned by adults. During children's play, the adults in class interact when appropriate to stretch and challenge them further.

Observations and Assessment

Observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal, Learning Journal. Entries in the journal may include photographs, pieces of work, and staff observations. Parents/carers are encouraged to view the journal weekly and add their own comments and observations to show us what their children are able to do at home. Initially the entries in the learning journals show a baseline of the pupil's abilities when they join the hospital school. As targets are then set and worked towards, the entries in the Learning Journal will focus more specifically on progress in those target areas of learning. The children's progress is reviewed continually and next steps will be identified. As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. Teaching staff continue to monitor development across all seven areas of learning and Characteristics of Effective Learning and update our pupil profile document. Upon discharge a report is written commenting on all areas, and specifically on progress against targets. This report is sent directly to the pupil's home school and parent/carer.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum that teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety. We promote the good care of the children in numerous ways, and work closely with medical professionals and parents to ensure children are safe and nurtured appropriately. For example, we attend MDT meetings, ward rounds and supervision sessions to ensure our work with the children is a key component of their recovery and return to life outside of the hospital.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace.

We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need. In doing so, we work closely with parents, medical professionals and outside agencies.

Safety Including Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements

The safety and welfare of our children is paramount at Southampton Hospital School. We have robust policies and procedures in place to ensure their safety.

Throughout our school we provide a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to take risks, follow rules and stay safe. We comply with the welfare requirements set out in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage and understand that we must:

- Promote the welfare of all children;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively and appropriately;
- Ensure all adults working with children are suitable to do so;

- Ensure that the environment is safe and all equipment and furniture is fit for purpose;
- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

Staff and visitors are prohibited from using their mobile phones in our classrooms or at bedside, only the class iPads are used to photograph children (for observations and assessment purposes) and children must be appropriately dressed in photographs.

Southampton Hospital School has robust systems in place to ensure that all practitioners who have regular contact with children are suitable for their role.

We work closely with medical staff within the wards to ensure appropriate access to first aid, in line with the statutory requirements of the EYFS framework. We also ensure that all school trips are attended by a First Aid trained member of NHS staff.

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Southampton Hospital School. Safeguarding is overseen by our designated safeguarding leader; Nell Giles (Headteacher).

Ratios

The School will ensure that staff levels within the Early Years setting comply with statutory guidance and can meet the needs of the children, provide suitable levels of supervision and keep them safe. During class times, children will be kept within sight and hearing at all times.

The Role of Parents/Carers

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We also understand that whilst their child is in our setting, they may need additional help and support during a challenging time. We believe, however, that they have a significant role to play in the lifelong education of their child. We strive to create and maintain partnerships with parents/carers as we recognise that they can have a significant impact on a child's learning when they leave us. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

- Before we begin working with your child, we will meet with you and your child's medical team, to share information and discuss your child's needs and interests.
- Throughout the admission, you can request to meet with your child's teacher to review progress or share work.
- During your child's time at our school, they will have access to lots of books and we encourage you to continue to read with your child.
- We provide curriculum planning overviews on our website, you can meet with your child's teacher to discuss these if you wish.
- We operate an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns or to ask questions, we invite you to contact the school office on 02381206667.
- On discharge, your child's teacher will send you a report that details your child's achievements and targets whilst at the hospital school.

Transitions

When a Year R pupil joins the school, Hospital staff meet the parent/carer to initially discuss school related matters and to gather their viewpoint. Contact is then made with the homeschool to collect information regarding learning in all 7 areas, including their baseline assessment data and details of the phonics learning. For more information on our phonics offer please see the separate Curriculum Policy for Phonics. Staff are skilled in assessing a pupil's abilities and skills quickly. Having gathered information from parents, home school and working with the pupil, targets are created to form focus for the pupil's learning whilst registered at the Hospital School. We endeavour to work on targets and use strategies which match up with the child's learning from their homeschool to make the transition as smooth as possible. This will include targets set in EHC plans, unless they are not achievable in our context. If this is

the case, this will be documented and shared with parents and home schools. Upon discharge a report is written commenting on all areas, and specifically on progress against targets. This report is sent directly to the pupil's home school and parent/carer once again bridging the gap between SHS and the child's homeschool. Alongside the discharge report, the children also complete a reintegration questionnaire for their regular teacher with an adult to support their transition back to school by giving them the opportunity to share any worries. Two follow up online feedback forms are also sent to the child's school and/or parent/carer to follow up on their educational reintegration and progress.

Monitoring the EYFS

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children, taking account of their personal situations and the environments in which we can teach. All staff have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. SHS ensures that all staff leading or teaching Year R have relevant and timely professional development. Training for all staff takes place, at least annually, to ensure consistency in provision between areas of the hospital site and outreach teaching. The processes of initial information gathering, planning, teaching methods, and ongoing assessment are clear, as well as the common language which is used in the teaching of Early Years at SHS. The EYFS leader is available to guide staff with further training if needed in order to ensure that all children are fully supported to progress. Training takes the form of meetings, presentations and guidance videos available to staff. The EYFS leader monitors the planning and delivery of Early Years teaching through professional dialogue with staff, examining planning and evidence of work. The EYFS leader and Primary Curriculum leader work closely together and attend relevant HAMWIC training to ensure SHS keeps up to date with local and national developments. They work in conjunction with and receive guidance from the HAMWIC EYFS Teaching and Learning Advisor.

Management Arrangements

The EYFS Leader in conjunction with the Head Teacher is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of this policy.

All Staff are responsible for implementing procedures outlined in this policy.

Dissemination of the Policy

The policy will be given to all members of staff and copies will be available for parents, including via the school website.

SHS EYFS Policy			
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