



## Squirrel Hayes First School

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Policy Owner Signature	Mrs F. Taylor	Ms V. Daniel	Mrs F Taylor	Mrs F Taylor	Mrs F Taylor	Mrs F Taylor	Mrs F Taylor	Mrs F Taylor	Mrs F Taylor
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# Early Years

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# Foundation Stage Policy

## EYFS Policy 2023/2024

Member of staff responsible: Fay Taylor

Date policy written: January 2021

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years teaching and learning in The Foundation Stage at Squirrel Hayes First School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

### **Introduction**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to the learning and development of all children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just a preparation for the next stage but is vitally important in itself.

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 Foundation Stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

All children begin school with a variety of experiences and learning. It is the privilege of the practitioners working in the Foundation Stage to take on the task of building upon that prior learning and experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning, ensuring that parents/guardians, support staff and the teachers work effectively together to support children's learning and development.

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## Aims/Objectives

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Squirrel Hayes First School the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five "Every Child Matters" outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Squirrel Hayes First School we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions
- ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development
- provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel

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At Squirrel Hayes First School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent learners. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and carers to help every child reach their full potential.

### **Statutory Framework of EYFS**

We adhere to the DfE (2020) 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS reforms early adopter version) 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**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents/ carers;
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven curriculum areas, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and carers;
- Plan challenging learning experiences, 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.

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### **Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development. In partnership with parents, the school promotes the learning and development of pupils to ensure they are ready for the next stage of education.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape education programmes in EYFS settings. These are split into two sections - prime and specific; however, all the sections are interconnected and important.

The 'prime' areas of learning and development are:

- Communication and language
  - Listening, attention and understanding
  - Speaking
- Physical development
  - Gross motor skills
  - Fine motor skills
- Personal, social and emotional development
  - Self-regulation
  - Managing self
  - Building relationships
  -

The 'specific' areas of learning and development are:

- Literacy
  - Comprehension
  - Word reading
  - Writing
- Mathematics
  - Number
  - Numerical patterns
- Understanding the world
  - Past and present
  - People, culture and communities
  - The natural world

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- Expressive arts and design
  - Creating with materials
  - Being imaginative and expressive

At Squirrel Hayes First School we believe the three prime areas of learning most essential for children's readiness for future learning and healthy development. We focus on the prime areas of learning when children begin in Pre Nursery and Nursery and when learners are ready we begin to put more focus on the specific areas. We aim to deliver the prime and specific areas through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-guided and child-initiated activities.

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.

These link closely with Squirrel Hayes First Schools BLP (Building Learning Power) skills.

**Playing and exploring** links with the schools **resourceful** BLP

**Active learning** links with the schools **Resilience** BLP

**Creating and thinking critically** links with the schools **Reflective** BLP

**Teamwork** links to the schools **Reciprocity** BLP

Within the Classroom we celebrate these skills with learning characters who we have given special names:

Reflective Rebecca

Resourceful Rupert

Reciprocity Reece

Resilient Ruby.

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The learners therefore become familiar with the terms and are able to celebrate the different ways that they learn which is then discussed and celebrated at key points during the day.

### Behavioural Expectations

Within Early Years we promote positive relationships and model high behavioural standards for the children to see. If the children in the setting make the wrong choices they are shown by an adult the correct way of behaving with an explanation of what they did differently.. They then get 2 warnings about inappropriate behaviour, If the behaviour continues they will move down the rocket and they will sit on time out for up to 3 minutes. Following time out the children have to apologise for their behaviour and have a chat about what they did wrong. They then move back up to the rocket. If the behaviour is severe, dangerous or significantly hurts someone then children will go straight to time out.

When upset we use self regulation and co regulation strategies to support the children through their emotions, these are displayed around the room as a reminder for both children and adults.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences 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.

We create long term plans based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas of learning. At the beginning of each topic the children are encouraged to share their ideas for learning experiences with us. Literacy and Numeracy are planned for each term to ensure all the skills and knowledge needed to be gained are taught in a spiral approach leading to mastery of these skills to ensure a smooth transition to year 1. Our long term planning carefully links to the rest of the school to ensure progression of skills and knowledge. These ideas are then used to inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations which identify areas to focus on. We always remain flexible to allow for unplanned circumstances and children's responses this is informed by on-going observational assessment to ensure mastery of skills. Children will engage in whole group and small group activities

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alongside their independent learning. There are also allocated times for whole class daily 'carpet learning sessions'.

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. In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and build these into our practice. We create a stimulating learning environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and outdoors as far as possible.

**Guided Learning** - is planned by teachers into levels of challenge which are personalised in order to ensure that all learners are appropriately challenged and have the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge at an appropriate rate.

**Phonics:** - Learners access Phonics at the start of Nursery focusing on sounds in the environment and being able to hear sounds. As soon as teachers think the learners are ready they move onto the RWI programme where they focus on learning pure sounds then moving onto digraphs and using Fred Talk (segmenting and blending) in the Spring and Summer terms. RWI is continued in Reception where the learners are regularly assessed for progress and then grouped accordingly to ensure rapid progress for all learners through the RWI programme.

**Handwriting** - Learners in Nursery access daily handwriting focused on holding a pencil correctly and forming the letters in their name. Learners in Reception access RWI handwriting. Learners are regularly assessed to ensure rapid progress of letter formation. Handwriting is followed up in guided learning and within independent learning to ensure the high expectations within handwriting are followed throughout the day.

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**Outdoor Classroom**:- plans detail learning opportunities on offer in all areas of learning within the outdoor classroom. These are linked to the indoor learning opportunities to ensure continuity of learning opportunities. Adults observe the learners outside and model and assess learning skills. Learners are encouraged to transfer and apply the skills they have focused on in their Guided Learning.

**Independent Learning**:- Independent learning activities are planned to cover all areas within the EYFS curriculum. Adults ensure that there are a range of opportunities for the learners each day. Adults observe learners through independent learning and intervene with the use of key questioning, modelling of the use of full sentences and they help to encourage the learners to transfer knowledge gained through guided activities into their independent learning.

**Vocabulary and language development** - Vocabulary and language development are key parts of our curriculum in Early Years and we promote the development of vocabulary and language in a number of ways. We have twice daily talk through story sessions which are planned story sessions linked to RWI which develops weekly vocabulary and talking in sentences and understanding of language. We also have focused vocabulary each week linked to topics, literacy and numeracy which are displayed in the room for all adults to access. We also follow the Welcomm language development programme which is an individual language intervention for all learners in the Early Years.

## **The Learning Environment**

*"A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces."*

("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2012)

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We aim to create an attractive, welcoming, creative and stimulating learning environment, which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside; children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. The learning environment is divided into a variety of different areas: role play, book corner, writing table, number table, fine motor table, computer area, cutting area, messy area, small world, sand, water, outside, construction,. These areas are carefully arranged to encourage quiet areas and more active areas within the learning environment. Children are encouraged to become independent learners and to take some responsibility for initiating their own lines of enquiry and investigation.

### **Observations and Assessment**

At Squirrel Hayes First School we undertake assessment for learning. We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps to meet their development and learning needs. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process.

As part of our daily practice we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways and everyone in class is encouraged to contribute. Photographic observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal, Learning Journal.

The children's progress is reviewed continually. Throughout their time in the foundation stage, parents/carers are welcomed in to share their children's learning; both informally through our 'open door' policy and more formally during parent/teacher consultations.

At the end of the year the EYFS profile provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements including whether they have reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). Children are assessed against the Early

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Learning Goals (ELG) by the class teacher - who uses the exemplification documents, and their knowledge of the children to make a 'best fit' judgement.

The children are assessed as achieving a 1 or 2 against each area of the EYFS curriculum:

- 2 = Expected ELG - meeting the expected level
- 1 = Emerging ELG - not yet meeting the expected level

This profile data is the statutory data that is sent to the Local Authority and used to help school benchmark and identify improvements.

Teaching and learning in Communication & Language, Literacy and Mathematics is monitored by the literacy and mathematics coordinators on a regular basis, through lesson observations and pupil interviews. The teaching staff monitor teaching and learning across the foundation stage each year and analyses EYFS Profile data in conjunction with the head teacher.

### **Health and Safety**

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

In the foundation stage 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;

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- Ensure all children have a challenging and enjoyable learning experience.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious fruit snacks, access to water throughout the day, allocating significant time for physical development and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. *We follow the brilliant brushers programme to ensure we are promoting good oral health both in school and at home through daily tooth brushing sessions and sending toothbrushes and toothpaste home with every child.*

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

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

The Child Protection Policy is in place to ensure the safety of all stakeholders at Squirrel Hayes First School. Backing up this policy is a dedicated safeguarding team. All staff are vigilant in reporting concerns which are recorded using the schools safeguarding system.

### **Equal opportunities**

We value all our children as individuals, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meet the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals.

### **Inclusion**

We work closely with the parents/carers of our high achieving children to ensure that their individual needs are met and their talents fostered. We ensure that these children are challenged appropriately to reach their full potential.

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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 and in doing so, work closely with parents/carers and outside agencies.

Additional adult support may be provided for children with special medical needs e.g. allergies, thus increasing the adult/pupil ratio.

Personal Learning Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. Teachers discuss these targets with the child and his/her parents/guardians. Progress is monitored and reviewed every term. The school's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

For further information see Special Educational Needs Policy.

### **The role of parents / carers.**

We recognise the central importance of parents/carers as children's first educators. We believe 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 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:

- Holding information evenings before the children start school;
- Talking to them about their child's interests and needs during our introductory sessions in school and at our home visits carried out each July;
- Being welcoming and approachable and having an open-door approach for parents to voice concerns/ask questions;
- Inviting them to a parent consultations to discuss how their child has settled and share progress and next steps for learning;
- Encouraging parents to read with their child at home and make comments in their reading record books;
- Providing curriculum planning overviews for each topic, each term, highlighting how they can support their child at home;

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- Inviting parents into school for 'parent phonics and maths' sessions to demonstrate how we teach phonics and maths help them support their child;
- Providing parents with an end of year report detailing achievements and their child's EYFS profile.
- We also 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 to talk about their lives, work and experiences.

### **Transitions**

Transitions are carefully planned for and significant time is given to ensure continuity of learning and care. At times of transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings. Children attend a number of introductory sessions with their parents/carers to develop familiarity with the settings and practitioners. Our staff also visit the local nurseries and preschools in return, to familiarise themselves with the children.

Parents/carers are encouraged to take up the offer of a home visit or have the option to instead meet with staff in school. This is a valuable time to talk 1:1 with them and answer any concerns/queries they may have.

At the end of the EYFS, our Reception teacher meets with the Year 1 teacher to liaise with them and discuss the individual children and their specific needs. The children's assessment data is sent with them to Year 1 so that their new teachers are able to plan for their 'next steps in learning' from the moment they enter their new class. Children spend a transition block at the end of the school year in the Year 1 classroom to ensure that they are familiar and comfortable with their new teacher and are 'next year ready'.

#### **At Squirrel Hayes First School:**

- Learners are encouraged to develop independence when dressing and undressing and when organising their personal belongings throughout the Reception year

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- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the Summer Terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support
- Reception learners meet the year 1 teacher during whole school activities and assemblies during the Reception year
- Individual EYFS Profile information is passed on to the year 1 teacher
- An EYFS Profile end of year class summary is passed on to the year 1 teacher
- Reception and year 1 teachers meet to discuss individual needs of Learners in July
- Reception learners visit their new year 1 class and teacher for 2 weeks in July.

### **Monitoring of the EYFS**

We are committed to providing the best possible experiences for our children. All adults in the team have a key role in children's learning and development. Therefore, they are required to be knowledgeable and skilled in the EYFS curriculum. Any training needs for existing or new members of staff are identified and addressed as part of performance management targets.

## **DOCUMENT CHANGE LOG**

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Version No.	Date of review	Reviewer	Changes Made
01	Oct 2009	Fay Salter	New policy formulated
02	March 2010	Ruth Lear	Changes to staffing details
03	Feb 2011	Ruth Lear	Planning, staffing & EY's class structure.
04	March 2012	Ruth Lear	No Changes
05	March 2013	Ruth Lear	New EYFS framework, staffing & class structure.
06	January 2014	Fay Taylor H Johnson Allen	Staffing and Phonics/RWI
07	January 2015	Fay Taylor	Staffing/phonics/inclusion
08	January 2016	Fay Taylor	Phonics, outdoor environment, BLP, staffing, adult focus sessions
09	February 2017	V Daniel	Planning/Staffing/Phonics
10	February 2018	Fay Taylor	Changes highlighted in Yellow
11	February 2019	Fay Taylor	Changes highlighted in Yellow
12	February 2020	Fay Taylor	Changes highlighted in Green
13	Feb 2021	Fay Taylor	New Policy created in line with being an Early adopter school
14	Jan 2022	Fay Taylor	Small wording changes
15	March 23	Fay Taylor	Brilliant brushers and vocab and language development
16	March 24	Fay Taylor	Behavioral expectations

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