



**A member of Hatton Academies Trust**

<b>Title</b>	Early Years Policy
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<b>Associated Policies</b>	Teaching and Learning Policy Behaviour & Relationship Policy
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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	3
1. Aims: .....	3
2. Early Years Curriculum .....	3
3. Four Principles of EYFS:.....	3
3.1 A Unique Child.....	3
3.2 Positive Relationships .....	4
3.3 Enabling Environments .....	4
3.4 Learning and Development.....	5
4. Areas of Learning .....	5
5. Play.....	5
6. Characteristics of Effective Learning.....	5
7. Planning.....	6
8. Assessment .....	8
8.1 Formative assessment .....	8
8.2 Assessment cycle .....	8
8.3 Phonics Assessments .....	8
9. Transitions.....	9
9.1 Transition from Nursery to Reception .....	9
9.1 Transition from Reception to Key Stage 1 .....	9
10. Partnership with Parents .....	10
14. Monitoring and Review.....	10

## Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their first year in school. Our Early Years provision accommodates children the term after they turn three in Foundation Stage One (FS1) and Reception (Foundation Stage Two, FS2) for those who have turned four by the 1<sup>st</sup> September of that school year. At Ecton Village Primary Academy FS1 and FS2 are combined into one class with appropriate differentiated provision across the shared space. It is staffed by an Early Years Specialist teacher and a level 2 teaching assistant.

### 1. Aims:

- Provide a safe, challenging and stimulating environment which is responsive to the needs of all children attending the setting
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum
- Establish foundations on which the children can develop into independent and life-long learners
- Provide support for children to build relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing
- Provide a structure for learning which has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences
- Provide the knowledge and skills that the children will require in readiness for future learning and development in Key Stage One

### 2. Early Years Curriculum

The Early Years classes follow the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 Early Years Foundation Stage document, which is available on the Academy website or to download at:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974907/EYFS\\_framework\\_-\\_March\\_2021.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf)

This document clearly defines what we teach and the policy details the specifics of our setting

### 3. Four Principles of EYFS:

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

#### 3.1 A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We gather information about children's interests through observations and discussion and use this to help provide learning opportunities linked to these. We use praise through the Principal's Award for Excellence, pupil of the Week, stickers and praise (see Behaviour & Relationship Policy for further

details) to encourage and motivate the children and to help them develop a positive attitude towards learning.

### 3.2 Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. Positive relationships are fostered using circle times, sticker charts and through the curriculum.

### 3.3 Enabling Environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key part in supporting and extending children's development. The physical Early Years environment is divided into three areas through which the children can move freely. There is an indoor area, an indoor/outdoor area and a garden; these are loosely zoned into areas of learning so children can locate and access resources independently, whilst having the flexibility to move resources from one area to another as the direction of their play changes. The outside area contains a vegetable garden / pond, a mud kitchen, an undulating path, a sandpit and an astro turf to enable climbing activities to take place safely. There are periods of time allocated daily where children free-flow around the inside and outside areas engaging in child initiated activities.

To support children's transitions from indoor to outdoor play we have a no shoe policy for the inside space. Children take their school shoes off as they enter the indoor area and replace these with sensible slippers or socks/tights. We recognise the children's need for quiet and order in the indoor space to allow them the greatest opportunity for concentrated work. The opportunity to take off and put on shoes also increases their level of independence and dressing skills. Slippers also eliminate a higher noise level in the shared area. The children use rugs for a great deal of floor work and slippers help to maintain the cleanliness of the environment, avoiding mud and dirt being trodden in. In a 10 year study across several countries including England, led by Professor Stephen Hoppell of Bournemouth University it was found that when children were shoeless:

- Behaviour improved
- Engagement and concentration improved
- Noise reduced providing a calmer environment
- Children felt more comfortable to work on a clean floor / rug

Staff working in the Early Years area also wear slippers when working with the children.

#### *Wellies for outdoor play and Field walks*

During their reception year the children at Ecton Village Primary Academy are provided with access to the outdoor area and will be able to go outside in all weathers. We provide aprons for children to wear if wet outside or if engaging in water play. In addition to this, parents are asked to provide their child with a pair of named wellington boots and ensure the child attends school dressed in suitable named outdoor clothing, such as a warm waterproof coat and gloves with fingers (not mittens) on cold days..

As we are located in a small rural village, opportunities for exploring nearby fields are abundant. We ask that the children have their wellies available at school at all times as we will often go for a 'Welly Walk'. The children are accompanied by two adults on a countryside walk. We also ask for the children to use their wellies for the mud kitchen and large outdoor sandpit.

### 3.4 Learning and Development

We use observations to assess children's interests, stages of development and learning needs prior to planning challenging, meaningful and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning. Children have daily opportunities to learn through a mixture of adult led and child initiated activities. Adults intervene in children's play to extend their learning and help the children to develop of new lines of enquiry and interest. Adult led activities are structured and planned for based on the assessments of children's needs in all areas of learning and provide a systematic approach to teaching skills such as phonics, fluency in number and writing. Adults then provide opportunities during child initiated activities for children to apply these skills.

## 4. Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of 3 **Prime** areas of learning;

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development

There are four **specific** areas of learning;

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

## 5. Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the EYFS. We believe that learning through play is effective when we provide purposeful activities and experiences that interest children. Learning is greatly enhanced when supportive, knowledgeable adults intervene in play and encourage children to think about what they are doing and provide them with opportunities to explore and experiment with ideas. Through play children have opportunities to practise and consolidate new skills including skills such as; negotiating, discussing, investigating and questioning.

## 6. Characteristics of Effective Learning

There are three identified Characteristics of Effective Learning which are based around children's attitudes towards learning, their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. Teacher observe children with these characteristics in mind and assess the level at which they are able to demonstrate these characteristics. These assessments are considered when planning future activities and experiences. The three characteristics are set out in the following table:

<b>Characteristics of Effective Learning</b>		
<b>Playing and Exploring (Engagement)</b>	<b>Active Learning (Motivation)</b>	<b>Creating and thinking critically (Thinking)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Finding out and exploring</b></li> <li>• <b>Play with what they know</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being involved and concentration</li> <li>• Keeping trying</li> <li>• Enjoying achievement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having their own ideas</li> <li>• Making links</li> <li>• Choosing ways to do things</li> </ul>

## 7. Planning

At Ecton Village Primary Academy we follow a skills based learning approach to planning experiences and provision based on the interests and skills level of the children, which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account. Regular assessment and observations help to inform staff about the children's interests and skill level and these are then used to plan experiences within the Early Years area. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Adult led activities are planned for and delivered in a number of ways:

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED):**

We have weekly timetabled sessions for supporting children in development of their personal, social and emotional development. During these whole class adult led sessions, we follow academy programmes and initiatives, such as Protective Behaviours, E-Safety and Anti-bullying. It is through these and other planned PSED opportunities that we help the children interact effectively and develop positive attitudes of themselves and others.

### **Communication and Language:**

We use the Write from the Beginning writing scheme to support children in developing early writing skills. Write from the beginning is based on children orally rehearsing their writing before putting pencil to paper. It also places emphasis on the illustrations that go alongside the writing to enable children to remember the sentence that they wish to write. The thinking and creative processes involved in 'being a writer' is also given high importance. Children are encouraged to always 'have a go' at putting something on paper regardless of what level of writing they are at

### **Physical Development:**

Children will be supported to play games and take part in activities which include; throwing and catching, kicking, climbing and balancing in order that they can practise and become confident with these skills. Children will also be supported to participate in activities which include: joining, cutting, pouring, threading and manipulating materials in order to develop and practise fine motor control. We also provide children in Early Years with the opportunity to practise and develop physical skills once a week during a Physical Education lesson which is delivered planned for and delivered by the class teacher.

**Literacy:**

**Reading and writing:** We follow Read, Write Inc. systematic phonics programme in which children; learn all of the phonemes (sounds) and how they link to graphemes (letters); read story books and non-fiction books closely matched to their developing phonic knowledge; read with fluency and expression; learn to spell using known sounds; write confidently by practising what they want to write out loud first and work well with a partner. Children have daily phonics lessons which last 15 minutes at the start of the academic year and increase gradually to 30 minutes by the end of the academic year. See website for parent videos and further information:

<http://www.ruthmiskin.com/en/read-write-inc-programmes/phonics/>

Children also read individually to adults within the Early Years area on a weekly basis. Reading books are chosen to match the child's level of reading ability and we strongly encourage parents to also read at home at least 4 times a week to help develop children's reading skills further.

**Handwriting:** We consider handwriting to be a key literacy skill which needs to be taught actively through discrete lessons. We follow the Kinetic Letters handwriting programme which enables children to develop the necessary fine and gross motor skills in readiness for handwriting. Kinetic Letters places great emphasis on developing children's 'core strength' in their bodies as well as specifically in hands and fingers, to enable them to be ready for handwriting activities. Children take part in handwriting lessons which incorporate whole body and hand strength exercises in a discreet daily session. Children will use whiteboards and pens for the majority of the early Kinetic Letters work, before progressing to pencil and paper.

**Mathematics** We plan and deliver a daily 30-minute whole class mathematics lesson in which children use concrete resources such as Numicon, cubes and real-life objects to learn about and explore concepts of numbers, space, shape and measure. In addition to this, teachers plan for opportunities to revisit the concept taught by engaging with children during their free flow play based learning time in order that the children can demonstrate their ability to apply their new knowledge to everyday situations. The teachers plan for different outcomes during these activities depending on each child's current stage of development in this area.

**Expressive Arts and Design** We plan for children to experiment with materials and media and to find out about their properties. Adult led activities involve children working in a small group with adult support to explore; sounds, patterns, movement, technique and tools. We plan for children to explore the world of pretence by building on their knowledge of the real world through role play, small world play and music. Adult led activities are planned for in which children have the opportunity to access resources in these areas in open ended ways where they are encouraged to make choices and gain confidence in their own ideas.

**Knowledge of the World** We plan for children to learn about themselves and other around them by looking at similarities and differences. Children are also provided with opportunities to explore the world around them by looking at and noticing the natural world and the man-made world in their close vicinity. Through planned activities children are able to begin to discuss what they observe and in doing so, make sense of it. This includes planning activities in which children recognise technology

within their homes and the academy setting in order they can identify different technologies and their uses.

## 8. Assessment

Throughout the year children's knowledge, skills and understanding are assessed and tracked using the development stages set out in the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)' document.

When children enter the Academy within the EYFS they will be assessed during the first six weeks of being inducted against the learning statements in mathematics, literacy and PSED in order to establish a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. We will also consider assessment information handed up from previous early years settings. Judgements will be made based on adult's observations and children's performance in a range of adult led activities.

### 8.1 Formative assessment

Accurate assessment depends on getting to know our children well and gathering information from a range of sources; observations of the children at play, during adult led activities, through discussion with parents and through talking to the children. We keep photographic and written adult evidence along with adult knowledge of the child and examples of children's own work to help us build up a picture of each child's strengths and achievements. This evidence is then used to help assess each child's current stage of development in all EYFS areas. Every child has an electronic 'learning journal' in which we record our observations and a folder in which we store samples of the children's work. The electronic system we use for creating children's learning journals is called 'Tapestry.' Parents and children have access to children's folders and the electronic learning journals all year round. This system is used to track children's progress throughout the academic year. Children also have a Busy Book. Pieces of work are collected in this book Journey to help inform adult's judgements of the levels that the children are working at.

### 8.2 Assessment cycle

Baseline – within first half term of the academic year

Autumn – At the end of the second term of the academic year, progress data is analysed

Spring – At the end of the fourth term of the academic year, progress data is analysed

Summer – At the start of the sixth term of the academic year, progress data is analysed

Summative data – In June of each academic year all children will be assessed against the EYFS Profile Early Learning Goals, stating whether they are Emerging, Expected or Exceeding within each goal.

### 8.3 Phonics Assessments

Children are placed into phonics groups according to their phonic knowledge and frequent assessments are made in order that the groupings are fluid and responsive to children's differing pace of learning. Phonic assessments will take place at least once a term for all children.

## 9. Transitions

We endeavour to ensure a smooth transition for children between Nursery and Reception and at the end of the EYFS as children move into Key Stage 1. We recognise that children may be vulnerable at stages of transition and implement a range of strategies in order to support children and their parents to feel secure and confident to face the challenges of starting school and progressing through the stages of their school life. We manage transitions in the following ways:

### 9.1 Transition from Nursery to Reception

The Academy holds open sessions in the summer term prior to the children starting school. Practical information is shared with parents and families are invited to 'stay and play' sessions where the children can become familiar with the setting with their parents beside them for support.

For those children who have not attended FS1 at Ecton Village Primary Academy, the Reception class teacher liaises with the feeder Nursery settings during the summer term to gather information and children's level of development are discussed. At this time the Reception class teacher will visit all children in their Nursery settings to observe them in play and to introduce themselves to the children allocated to their class. For children who have attended Ecton Village Primary Academy for FS1, the setting, routines and staff are all very familiar to the children.

In the first week of the academic year the Reception class teacher will arrange a home visit with children and the parents of all children in the setting. During the visit, the teacher and family support worker will meet the children in their own homes and they will also share information with parents about the expectations for children entering Reception classes and how they can support their children at home. This is also an opportunity for parents to share concerns about their child's learning and progress so far.

The FS2 children begin full time school in the second week of the term. Teachers support the children eating their lunches and at play.

### 9.1 Transition from Reception to Key Stage 1

We recognise that all children are unique and reach different stages of development at different times. Entry into Key Stage 1 is therefore an important transition as children's planned teaching and learning moves from one curriculum (EYFS) to another (National Curriculum). We adopt a number of strategies to ensure that this move is a positive experience for the children:

- Circle time discussions are held for all children about to move into Year 1 to prepare them for the changes
- Children who find managing change difficult are taken to visit Year 1 classes on several occasions prior to transition days and some identified children are provided with social stories to read at home and school in preparation for the changes
- Children's work completed on transition days are on display in the Year 1 class when Reception class children start in Year 1
- The Year 1 teacher will ensure there are opportunities for continuous provision for the first few weeks of the academic year when Reception children enter Year 1

- The Reception class teacher will hold moderation and assessment meetings with the Year 1 teacher during the summer term prior to children entering Year 1 in order to baseline the children based on their outcomes at the end of the EYFS and the statements at the start of the National Curriculum. This helps to ensure that the Year 1 teacher is planning for the children from appropriate starting points for all the children

## 10. Partnership with Parents

We recognise that parents are children first educators and most enduring educators and value the impact the working together with parents can have on children's learning, particularly in the early years. We foster these relationships in the following ways:

- Parent meeting in the Summer term prior to the children starting school
- Home visits for all children and families starting in Reception classes at the start of the academic year
- Thorough induction of all new children with their families should they start in Reception class during the academic year
- Holding parent meetings during the Autumn term which also include providing information to parents about how they can best support their children's learning at home
- Holding parents meetings during the Spring term which provide an opportunity to discuss children's progress and learning
- Providing parents with links to children's individual learning journals in order that they can gain access to ongoing assessment of their children at home and so they can contribute to learning journals themselves
- Providing parents with information about the learning that will take place over each term in order to keep them informed of themes and topics being covered
- Providing reading records and reading books and establishing a system for changing reading books which enables parents and children to read together at home on a daily basis
- Providing and encouraging parents and children to participate in other learning at home opportunities such as weekly mathematics, high frequency words to learn together and other topic based learning opportunities termly
- Operating an open door policy whereby parents can speak with a teacher in an informal situation should concerns or issues arise
- Providing regular sessions for parents to attend the Early Years setting where they can observe teaching and / or engage in learning activities with their children
- Attainment reports are given out at the end of the year and parents are given the opportunity to discuss them with the teachers
- Book and biscuit mornings are held twice each half term to provide parents with the opportunity to visit the classroom and listen to their child read or read them a story

## 14. Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Principal and CEO of Hatton Academies Trust will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system.

The Academy Committee reviews this policy annually. They may, however, review the policy earlier if the government introduces new regulations, or if the Academy Committee receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.