



Newton Hall Infants' School
Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy
2025 – 2026

‘All children deserve the care and support they need to have the best start in life. Children learn and develop at a faster rate from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives, so their experiences in early years have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning provide the foundation children need to fulfil their potential’

([EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#) 2024)

The Early Years applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Newton Hall Infants’ School our EYFS consist of our Reception and Governor-Led Nursery children.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Newton Hall Infants’ School we greatly value the importance that the Early Years plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe that early childhood is valid in itself as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims & Objectives

We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Newton Hall Infants’ School, we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience, explore and evolve.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum based upon themes and a rich selection of different texts, that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice, risk taking, decision making, and fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop excellent relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies.

The Early Years Statutory Framework sets out 4 principles that shape our practice:

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

A Unique Child

At Newton Hall Infants' School 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 and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning. We nurture each child's "uniqueness" and individuality.

Inclusion - We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child matters. All children at Newton Hall Infants' School are treated fairly regardless of race, gender, religion or abilities. All families are valued within our school.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all children and abilities. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences and interests when we are planning for their learning.

In EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of stimuli, opportunities and experiences to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of all children, including children with special educational needs, children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to outside agencies) as necessary;
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Newton Hall Infants' School we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as Partners - We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts in the nursery or reception class at our open initial transition visits.
- Collect information, data, concerns and interest for all children from their childcare provision or private nursery.
- Providing an All About me book for the children and parent/carers to complete and return to school prior to them starting reception.
- Outlining the school's expectations in the Home-School agreement for nursery and reception children.
- Inviting parents/carers and children the opportunity to spend time in classes for induction visits before starting school.

- Providing an induction meeting (*Preparing Your Child for School*) for Reception parents/carers to meet with staff to discuss school routines, expectations and to answer any questions parents/carers may have. Also discussion on phonics, reading and other discrete topics.
- Operating an open door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Early Years' staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them. (Communication can be done via the school app, Email or by contacting the school office)
- Children's work to be celebrated and uploaded regularly to individual learning portfolios for parents to see. Parents/carers are encouraged to contribute from home by uploading pictures or work that the children have completed. This further helps us to keep consistency and maintain home/school relationships.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in.
- Asking parents and carers to complete and sign the school's admissions pack at the beginning of the academic year.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents.
- Promoting the learning focus for the week and ideas for additional activities, which can be completed at home, these will be uploaded to Class Dojo.

All staff in the Early Years aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Enabling Environments

At Newton Hall Infants' School we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with a variety of open-ended stimuli that encourages investigation, play, risk taking and learning.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff.

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, needs, passions and abilities. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Developing

The EYFS Curriculum – Our curriculum for the Early Years reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational provision in Early Years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation from the others. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

They require a balance of adult led, adult directed and child initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of the Early Years. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The three Prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language

- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas. However, if a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Both Nursery and Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics sessions, following the "Unlocking Letters and Sounds" programme and the White Rose Maths scheme.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- **Play and exploring** - children will have opportunities to investigate, take risk and experience things.

We recognise that play underpins all learning and development for young children. Most children play spontaneously although some may need the support of adults. It is through play that children develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. By providing well-planned experiences based on children's spontaneous play, both indoors and outside we support our children to learn with enjoyment and challenge. Through play the children investigate and explore unknown situations. They learn to develop friendships and how to foster positive relationships. They also learn to explore their surroundings and take risks in a safe environment.

- **Active learning** - children will have time and space to concentrate build resilience if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

- **Creating and thinking critically** - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access the continuous provision and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.

Planning

The planning within the Foundation Stage allows the children to explore the themes and texts from our curriculum overview. The weekly plans take on these texts and themes and are also supported by the observations carried out of the children from the previous week. This enables children's interests, achievements and next steps to be addressed.

We teach carefully planned themes and use a diverse range of texts throughout the year to ensure every child is given a variety of different stimuli and experiences. The themes and texts chosen are supported by the children's interests; this helps to keep the children engaged and allows them to take ownership of their learning. We offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which works towards The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. We incorporate the seven areas of learning and development into a stimulating, creative, cross-curricular approach, ensuring breadth.

Observations

Early Years' staff evidence the children's work in a Mosaic Approach. A mix of activities in discrete topic books, floor books and post-it snap shots, which all build a bigger picture for each child. These then influence future planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. For the nursery children observations are uploaded to our online learning portfolio (This helps us maintain good relationships and strong communication with parents).

Assessment

During the first two to three weeks in Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child, using this to create a baseline for that child. Staff also complete the Statutory Reception Baseline within the first 6 weeks. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. Reception staff assess children on entry to show knowledge and understanding of basic concepts, e.g. shapes, colours, measures, numbers and letters.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Reception year, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Reception staff record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as *On Track or Not on Track*. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Early Years takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other practitioners in the setting, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

The teacher keeps an overview of learning and evidence the children's work in exercise books for discrete subjects, online learning portfolios, floor books and post-it snap shots. All of these systems help build a big picture of the child's ability, which we can then share with parents at each parents evening meeting.

Step trackers are updated in three data captures. This provides a summary sheet for the class which feeds into the whole-school assessment and tracking process. We record each child's level of development to be On Track or Not on Track using Birth to 5 age bands as a guide for staff. We are using Birth to 5 as a guide as we develop our own Curriculum Ambition Steps personal to Newton Hall Infants'. These steps will be created from where we expect our children to be at, at the three data capture points across the academic year.

The child's next teacher will use this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information at parents evening meetings and in the children's end-of-year report. Parents receive an annual written report. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in the summer term.

The Learning Environment

Both the classrooms and garden are organised with different areas that we believe can give the children many quality opportunities to learn. At Newton Hall Infants' we believe the children should be in an engaging environment that ignites their imaginations and curiosity to learn.

The continuous provision within the classrooms gives the children the chance to explore and learn through play. The open ended resources that the children have access to are there to help engage, stimulate and build on previous teaching and knowledge. Staff at times will be alongside the children in the continuous provision, to ask open ended questions and add additional stimuli. This will also give the staff the opportunity to see children building on prior teaching and knowledge. It may also identify need for intervention.

The EYFS children have their own garden as well as access to the main school grounds. Our garden is place for exploration and learning. We believe being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and enthusiastic when learning. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside.

Teaching & Learning Styles

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Early Years are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement; the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception Year;
- the provision for children to take part in activities and continuous provision that builds on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working in the Early Years.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; we therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Parents of all children starting in nursery or reception will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the summer term, prior to them starting, to meet their child's new teachers and other key staff and learn more about the Early Years Curriculum. This is an opportunity for staff to:

- Go through the nursery / reception information booklet;

- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals;
- Explain the arrangements for the gradual induction in
- Discuss discrete subjects e.g. Phonics, reading and number
- Eliminate any misconceptions

New class sessions - The children are given opportunities to visit school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. They will spend a session in their new class. Parents can leave their child during this session. This means that before they join their new class the Early Years environment is already a familiar place to them.

Starting in Key Stage 1 (Year 1)

Throughout the reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon; many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children.

Children will have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend sessions in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.' (Statutory Framework for EYFS 2021)

At Newton Hall Infants' School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

Keeping Safe - It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children. (See Newton Hall Infants' Child Protection within Safeguarding Children Policy).

Staff mobile phones are allowed in school, but are not allowed to be used in sensitive areas (EYFS, cloak rooms, toilets, when children are changing). Mobile phones should only be used for communication when not working with children.

Good Health - All children are provided with a healthy snack each day as well as being given the choice of milk or water. They have access to water at all times. They will also complete daily active minutes, Just Dance, Wake up Shake up.

Intimate Care - "Intimate" care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and a *Changing Log* is completed each time this is required. (See Newton Hall Infants' Intimate Care Policy).

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child. No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission (*Intimate Care Plan*) of the parent/carer of that child and all parents/carers will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins the school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies;

- - Staff Acceptable Use Policy
- - Child Protection within Safeguarding.

Visits and Trips

Newton Hall Infants' School places great value on educational visits for all of its pupils, including the very youngest, recognising that they provide a unique opportunity to enhance the curriculum and to extend and support class-based work. They provide opportunities which cannot be provided on site and can extend the knowledge and understanding of our youngest pupils.

Nursery children will explore the local area, within walking distance, as part of their curriculum.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of those working in EYFS to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Headteacher (Mrs L. Frazer) and Early Years Lead (Miss A. Hill) will carry out monitoring on Early Years as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

Review

Last Reviewed: June 2025

Next Review: June 2026