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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage extends from the age of three to the end of the reception year. Entry into Hawthorn Tree School is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are five (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).
- 1.2 The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and also in preparing children for later schooling. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- 1.3 The majority of children joining our school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been learning in one of the various educational settings that exist in our community. 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.

2 Aims and objectives

- 2.1 The curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing:
 - Making relationships;
 - Managing feelings and behaviour;
 - Self confidence and self esteem;
 - Listening and attention, understanding and speaking skills;
 - Movement and handling;
 - Health and self care;
 - Reading and writing;
 - Mathematical skills including Number and Shape, space and Measure;
 - Understanding of the world;
 - Expressive Arts and design skills.

3 Teaching and learning style

- 3.1 The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

3.2 The more general features of outstanding practice in our school that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents/carers 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 Early Years Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build 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 and carers;
- 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 Foundation Stage.

4 Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage

4.1 Through play, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

5 Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage

5.1 We believe that all of our children matter. We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning (see our policy on inclusion).

5.2 In the Early Years Foundation Stage, 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. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of 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.

5.3 We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;
- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid discrimination and stereotyping;
- planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- monitoring children's progress, and providing support (such as speech therapy), as necessary.

6 The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

6.1 Our curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage develops the children's skills through teaching and assessing each child's progress against the Development statements identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skills across all areas of learning and make outstanding progress.

6.2 Our children have focussed daily Phonics (RWI) and Mathematics sessions to enable them to develop a strong foundation in these core areas on which they can build their skills on throughout the Early Years and into KS1.

6.3 The Development Statements in the Early Years Curriculum Guidance are used as our objectives to teach from in our **short term planning**. The short term planning highlights the sessions' focus, a main teaching focus, exploration activity and assessment questions to ensure that the staff can assess whether each child has met the objective of the session. Furthermore at the end of each session the children identify their next steps for learning through self assessment. Each child verbalises to the staff whether they feel they were successful in meeting the objective for session 'Green for Go'; whether they needed a little support to meet the objective 'Yellow for OK'; or whether they need to revisit the objective to develop their skills 'Red for Recap'.

Our **Medium-term planning** is completed half-termly, and identifies the intended learning and the theme for the term. It identifies the focus for each area of learning and ensures opportunities are planned in for the children to develop their own learning during child initiated time. Furthermore, it highlights 'challenges' that the children should complete every couple of weeks for the EAD and UTW strands. This ensures that prior to each challenge the children have a good opportunity to explore and develop key skills and understanding in the area before undertaking a focussed activity (challenge).

The **Long-term planning** sets out the coverage of Development Statements for the year to ensure that all aspects of the EYFS Curriculum are focussed on throughout the year. The end of the Long-term planning sets out the coverage of themes for the year to ensure that the children get a varied, exciting and engaging curriculum throughout the EYFS year.

- 6.4 The school makes full use of the outdoor classroom, where a planned programme of appropriate activities takes place at all times of year. Children wear suitable clothing at all times.

7 Assessment

- 7.1 The Early Years Foundation Stage Assessment in our setting is used as a 'snap shot' of each child's learning at the end of the Reception Year in school. It is submitted to county during June for county and national comparisons. It summarises each pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals and children must be banded as 'Emerging', 'Expected' or 'Exceeding' for each area of learning.

In order to ensure this assessment is accurate and correct each child has a 'Development Statements' Tracker', a 'Phonics and Mathematics Target Sheet' and an electronic 'Learning Journey' on Tapestry which the parents can also access at home and update with their own observations to enable a wide range of evidence to be collected throughout the year from a variety of key people involved in the child's development.

Each child's 'Development Statements' Tracker' is then updated using information from the evidence collected and the Early Years' team professional judgements. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage takes the form of observations, child initiated work samples, video clips, photo evidence, observations from home (mainly on Tapestry), which involve the teacher, the child and other adults, as appropriate. Each child's age and stage for all areas of learning are then updated termly on the O-Track system in order to identify progress made and next steps for learning. This then forms a clear baseline for the children as they exit EYFS and enter KS1.

- 7.2 During the first term of the Early Years' Foundation Stage, the teachers and TA's assess the ability of each child. The EYFS team use evidence from previous settings, parental information and from observations that the Early Years' team undertake over the duration of the first term. These observations then form judgements about where each child is in their learning.

Each child's 'Development Statement's Tracker' is then highlighted to reflect what Age and Stage they are working in, in each area of learning. This data is then collated and put on our school tracking system O-Track to enable us to analyse the percentage of children working in each age and stage on-entry into our setting. These assessments allow us to identify areas of strength and weakness within the cohort, in order to tailor the planning for individual's and groups of children. We share the information contained in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at our Parent's evening meetings.

- 7.3 The Early Year's teachers and TA's complete ongoing assessments each term, and then update each child's Development Tracker termly and put the Ages and Stages for each area of learning onto the school assessment system 'O-Track' to analyse progress in each area of learning.

- 7.4 Parents and carers receive an annual report in the style of the Early Years Profile report sent to county at the end of the Summer term. It outlines how their child learns and whether they are 'Emerging/Expected/Exceeding' in each area of learning. This then reinforces their child's strengths and development needs, and enables them to see what

areas they can support their child in, in order for them to strive towards age-related expectations. They are sent to the parents/carers in early July each year.

8 The role of parents and carers

8.1 We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents or carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- opportunities given to the children to spend time with their teacher before starting school;
- inviting all parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- offering parents and carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class;
- encouraging parents to be involved in updating their child's electronic 'Learning Journey' regularly online through utilising Tapestry and also engaging them in dialogue on Tapestry in relation to the next steps in their child's learning;
- encouraging parents and carers to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns;
- staggered starts over the first 2 weeks into school to break the children into the school routine gently.
- encouraging parents and carers to stay if there are problems with the child's admission;
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;
- providing various activities that involve parents and carers, i.e. inviting parents and carers to parents evenings, in order to discuss the kind of work that the children are undertaking, inviting the parents into watch Christmas productions, involvement in 'Stay and Play' sessions termly throughout the year.

8.2 There are formal parents evenings twice a year where the parents are provided with the opportunity to discuss their child's strengths and areas for development. Also parents and carers receive a report on their child's attainment at the end of each school year.

9 Resources

9.1 We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning.

10 Risk Assessment

10.1 EYFS risk assessments are undertaken continually throughout EYFS and are adapted to meet the requirements of new legislation and also the activities that are provided within

the provision. Annual written risk assessments are displayed for the indoor and outdoor areas in both EYFS classrooms for all staff and visitors to refer to.

Monitoring and review

- 11 This policy is monitored by the governing body, and will be reviewed in two years, or earlier if necessary.