



## A Curriculum for young children

At High Spen Primary School the children have a broad balanced curriculum to promote their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development and cultural awareness. The curriculum is differentiated and rooted in a child centred philosophy which the focus lies upon the individual as a whole person. Active Learning through play is at the heart of our curriculum.

### [Birth to 5 Matters](#)

We follow this non-statutory guidance document for early years to support the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) (EYFS) framework and the end of Reception Early Learning Goals, supporting children to achieve to the best of their ability.

#### **Key Aspects of Birth to 5 Matters:**

- **Purpose:** It supports practitioners in fulfilling their statutory EYFS responsibilities and providing high-quality, child-centered education.
- **Focus Areas:** The guidance highlights key areas such as child development, the role of adults in learning, and the unique child, including self-regulation and characteristics of effective learning.
- **Key Themes:** It emphasizes the "here and now" of child development (physical, social, emotional health), connecting children to their family/community, and upholding children's rights.
- **Developmental Guidance:** It provides detailed information on developmental trajectories (known as "ranges"), designed as a tool for observation and assessment rather than a checklist.
- **Flexibility:** As non-statutory guidance, it allows settings to tailor their curriculum to meet the specific needs of their children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum is concerned with the child and the context or setting in which the learning takes place, as well as the content of the learning. The following principles express the basis of the curriculum for education in the early years.

- Early childhood is valid in itself and is a part of life, not simply a preparation for the next stage of education or future work.
- The whole child is considered to be important – social, emotional, physical, intellectual and moral development are inter-related.
- Learning is holistic and for the young child, not compartmentalized under subject headings.
- Children develop individually and at different rates and need to be given time to move through developmental stages at their own pace.
- Children learn best when they are in control and need to be independently responsible for their own learning.
- The organisation of space, materials and people must support learning, which is independent and inter-dependent.
- Children need a stimulating environment in which they can develop, in particular it should promote and enrich the acquisition of language.

- Young children learn most effectively through play, experimental investigation and first hand experience.
- Planning, decision making, prioritizing and sequencing are important and young children should be given suitable opportunities to develop these life skills.
- The adults and children to whom the child relates are of central importance. Parents are recognised as the child's first educators.
- The children access the curriculum through 7 areas of learning and development outlined below.

### Prime Areas

1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2. Communication and Language
3. Physical Development

### Specific Areas

4. Literacy
5. Mathematics
6. Understanding the World
7. Expressive Arts and Design

The Prime Areas of Learning and Development are fundamental to accessing all areas of learning within the environment and the planned learning experiences. As part of the daily routine the children access Reading, Writing and Mathematics through meaningful experiences on a daily basis.

As Early Years Practitioners we believe that children are entitled to a curriculum that:

- **Responds to individual needs;** whilst children have some common needs, each child is unique with needs that may be vital to their interests, development, motivation, confidence etc. Practitioners plan for each child's individual care and learning requirements, including the additional or different provision required to meet particular individual needs.
- **Acknowledges their natural enthusiasm and their need to be active learners;** in order for young children to grow into well motivated learners, full of curiosity for the world in which they live, they need a curriculum that is based on play and exploration.
- **Builds on previous experiences;** effective teaching and learning acknowledges what children already know and understand. The planning and organisation of activities and experiences responds to a wide range of previous experiences, interests and skills and develops self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn.
- **Supports and develops their thinking and learning;** the learning environment and the teaching opportunities within it stimulate and challenge children's

thinking. A wide range of teaching strategies are used based on children's learning needs.

- **Provides appropriate experiences and activities across all areas of learning and development;** both planning for and assessment of, children's learning enables them to make progress across all Areas of Learning and Development.

### **Play is Children's work.**

It is recognised as an important purposeful activity:

- It provides an opportunity to develop language by the child interacting, communicating and expressing ideas with peers and adults.
- It provides opportunities to practice and develop basic skills such as manipulative skills.
- It helps children to become self-confident and develop self-awareness.
- It helps children have control over their own actions.
- It helps children to learn to interact and work with others thus developing social skills and co-operative skills.
- It helps to encourage independent thinking.
- It nourishes curiosity by allowing children to explore.
- It develops concentration.
- It stimulates interest.
- It provides satisfaction and a sense of achievement.
- It gives pleasure and immense enjoyment.
- It allows children to learn through first-hand experience.
- It helps children become competent in key learning experiences and prepares them for the next stage in their learning.
- It provides a basis for further learning.

Play, like learning, is a process where understanding builds through experiences. We believe children are motivated by play, they accept responsibility for their own learning in play, and they work collaboratively and co-operatively and apply problem-solving strategies. To children work and play are not opposites but part of a continuum of experiences. Play must be challenging and structured. The quality of play is dependent on the resources available. Provision of resources and materials is essential to promote progress, development and further challenge. The adult's role in providing challenging play is vital. The adult needs to intervene when appropriate and engage in the play with children.

To do this the adult needs to: –

- Observe and discover what interests' individual children
- Note how children perceive and solve problems.
- Take cues from children.
- Work with them.
- Support, encourage and extend children's ideas.
- Identify play in all areas of learning.

- Build safe and secure relationships that nurture learning and development.

### Characteristics of Effective Learning

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At High Spen, supporting children in the Characteristics of Effective Learning, (a statutory element of the EYFS) is a central responsibility of our school early year's provision and staff.

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

At High Spen we promote the characteristics of effective learning by providing living experiences, allow opportunities for children to make choices, take responsibility of their learning, face different challenges and provide a variety of different learning experiences inside and out.