

# HITHERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE

## GROWING TOGETHER



### Teaching and Learning Policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

#### *Our Vision Statement*

*"Our vision is to create a school community where everyone feels valued, has the opportunity to explore and develop their strengths and is able to participate in new experiences. We aim to become an inspirational school, to produce good citizens for the future in an atmosphere that promotes confidence, high academic achievement, physical health and emotional well-being."*

# Document Control



## Change Record

Date	Author	Version	Change Reference
			No Previous Document
January 2017	T. O'Flynn	1.1	Changes made in line with new practice in EY



## Distribution

Reviewers	Approvers	Distribution
Achievement Committee	Full Governing Body	

**“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure safe and happy childhood is important in its own right, and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. When parents choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their children safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance.” DCSF – Early Years Foundation Stage 2008**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year.

The EYFS framework is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child** - Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
- **Positive Relationships** - Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
- **Enabling Environments** - 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 and carers.
- **Learning and Development** - Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in Early Years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.



OFSTED – September 2015

*“Teaching should not be taken to imply a ‘top down’ or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child-initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning, recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations.”*



## **Progress and Development**

Progress and development occurs in a child when they show high levels of involvement – when the brain is at its most active. *High level involvement occurs most often when children are able to pursue their own interests in an enabling environment, supported by skilful staff.* At Hitherfield ‘Teaching in the moment’ helps to make this possible.

# Teaching in the Moment

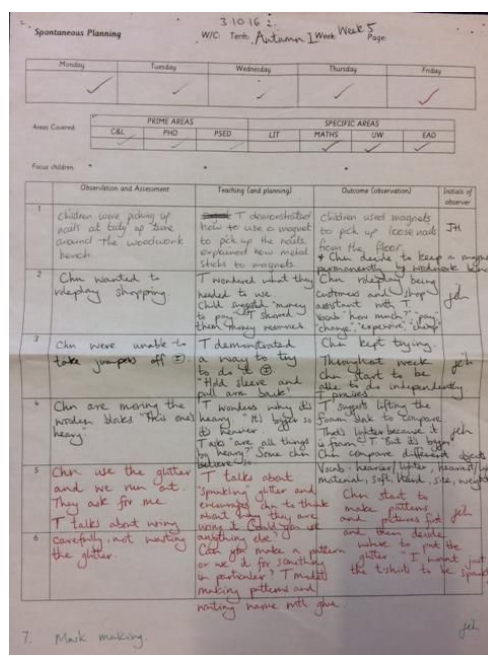
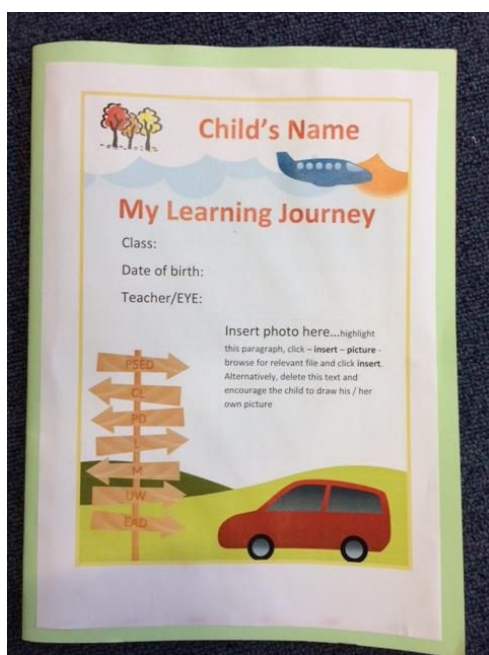
The cycle of observation, assessment and planning is carried out on a **moment-by-moment basis**. Practitioners at Hitherfield respond to each individual child's interests and actions, deciding how to move them on with their learning and understanding in that moment.

Some of these interactions and activities that occur during the week are recorded using our online assessment tool (EExAT) or on a spontaneous planning sheet. **We do not expect everything to be recorded and encourage practitioners to concentrate on the interactions that they are having with the children.**

The "spontaneous planning sheets" are blank at the start of the week. They are then filled up gradually by all adults involved. They are a record of group activities that have occurred during the week in each individual class. It is particularly important that the adults' input is recorded. The symbol "T" indicates "adult" followed by the input (teaching) **"T suggests ... encourages ...models ...asks ponders ...helps ... offers resources ... etc."**

In addition, "WOW" moments are recorded for all children as and when they occur. These are put in each individual child's Learning Journey.

Work is marked with an **S** if the child was supported or an **I** if the child produced the work independently.



### **We work in this way because...**

“Babies and young children are experiencing and learning in the here and now, not storing up their questions until tomorrow or next week. ***It is in that moment of curiosity, puzzlement, effort or interest – the ‘teachable moment’ – that the skilful adult makes a difference.*** By using this cycle on a moment-by-moment basis, the adult will be always alert to individual children (observation), always thinking about what it tells us about the child’s thinking (assessment), and always ready to respond by using appropriate strategies at the right moment to support children’s well-being and learning (planning for the next moment).”

From National Standards document Learning, Playing and Interacting P.22 – 23. The revised EYFS advises us to continue using this document.

### **A Unique Child - Focus Children**

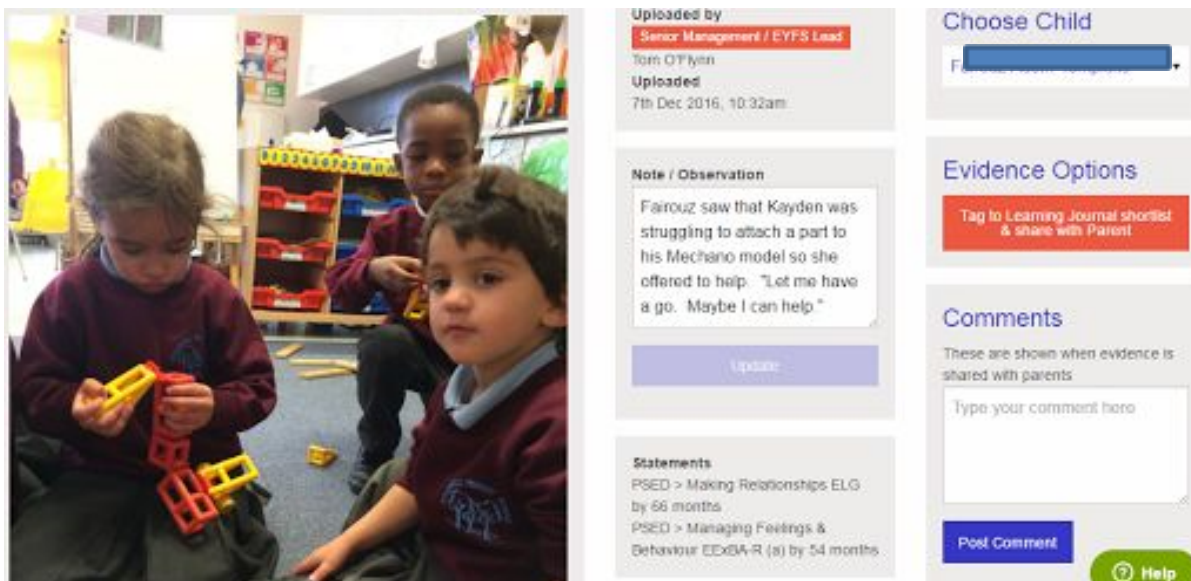
We have focus children

**NOT** focus activities

The adult goes to the child. The child is **NOT** called to come to the adult. Teachers use guided activities and respond in the moment to enhance and extend children’s learning across the curriculum. We work this way because high-level involvement occurs in child-initiated activities.

We have 3/4 focus children each week (approximately 10% of each class). All observations of these children during the week are attached to the child’s online Learning Journey (EExAT).





Staff meet with the parents of the focus children in the week following their 'focus week'. The discussion revolves around the completed online learning journey – a truly individual picture of the child's experience.

These reports are printed out and kept in the child's folder with all other evidence.

## **Making written observations**

It is important that the whole cycle is recorded – i.e. the initial observation, the assessment, the planning, teaching and the outcome. An example of such an entry might read:-

"Ross was looking at the plants and said 'I need some carrots for my soup'. He started to pull up some onions. T joined him and explained how to look carefully at the leaves and told him what the leaves on the carrot plants looked like. He examined the plants carefully and then pulled up three carrots."

Another example might be:-

"Jenna was standing by the rope bridge watching a boy go across and back. T joined her and she said 'I want a turn on there!' T encouraged her to repeat the phrase 'Can I have a turn please?' After a few minutes Jenna approached the boy and said 'Can I have a turn please?' The boy went across once more and then jumped down 'there you go'. Jenna played with the boy for a long period taking turns independently."

Practitioners often worry about how they can possibly show progress in the short period of an observation. Both these children made progress in a matter of seconds! Quality interactions should, and usually do, lead to progress. In both the examples above, the "plan"

was formulated and delivered “in the moment”. Records are often accompanied by a photo which helps to explain the observation being made by the practitioner.

## **Weekly Organisation**

The weekly organisation is as follows:- On Friday, the staff select 10% of the class (usually 3 children) who will be the “focus children” for the following week. These children are given a form to take home for their parents to complete – asking about current interests of the child, any special events in the family and any questions the parents may have. We also ask parents to send in 5 photos from home which we use with the children to find out what they do outside of school.

On Monday we start our observations of the children. During the week any adult who has a productive interaction with a focus child records the event on EExAT (the online learning journal).

All recorded observations are published using EExAT and shared with the parent in the week following the focus week.

## **An Enabling Environment**

We have a workshop style environment indoors and outside. All resources are available to the children. The children select what they want to do in each area. The principle is that resources are accessible to the children and they are varied, open-ended and high quality. This gives children the opportunity to select resources to support their chosen activity.

So, therefore, the areas are clear, stocked and tidy at the start of the day:- the tables and carpet areas are free of equipment but the resources are available next to these areas. For example, the unit below contains creative resources. It is placed near a table and the children can choose whether or not to go to this area and what to do if they do if they choose to go there. All containers are clearly marked so children know where everything goes.





## Sand/water

## Creative

When a class is organised in this way, the children are in control of their learning. They are able to select the area in which to play, the resources to use in that area and what to do with them. Obviously their choices are limited by the areas and resources available and it is therefore crucial to have appropriate areas with varied, high quality, open-ended resources. It is also vital that the areas are well stocked, tidy, clearly labelled (with picture and word) or shadowed and arranged to allow optimum access. We constantly review and reflect on the environment to see which areas are proving productive and which need altering.

Shadowing resources (as seen with the water/sand equipment above) helps children to be independent when tidying up. The 'shadows' are cut from coloured card or paper and glued to the shelf. Open shelving, such as in the photos above, is a great way to display and store resources for young children. They can see the resources easily and select the ones they want to use. "Less is more" is definitely the case with indoor equipment too:- with fewer, carefully selected resources, they are well used and easy to tidy up. If the resources are carefully selected, the majority can be used all year – the children will use them differently every day. In the photo above, the contents of the larger boxes on the bottom shelf can be changed to meet emerging interests. We also use shelving like this indoors for blocks, playdough equipment, sand resources, individual items (timers, abacus etc) and creative equipment.

## **Positive Relationships - The Role of the Adult**

The adults are there to teach. They do this through observing and interacting. All Early Years practitioners know the children very well and have a sound understanding of child development. This ensures that the adults enhance and extend the learning at the appropriate level for each unique child.

### **Quality Interactions**

The children become involved in activities of their choice. The adults observe the children carefully, join them, when appropriate, and engage in quality interactions (teaching) to move the learning on.

***Sir Michael Wilshaw says:- "Early years provision is only as good as the quality of interaction between adults and children."***

### **Keeping the Balance**

The children initiate their own learning and the adults support and guide them to extend the learning opportunities.

Throughout the year we assess and review the progress of all the children. We introduce teaching of specific skills as and when appropriate to individual children and groups of children.

## **Transitions**

Transition is successful when:-

1. Practitioners know each child, including their interests and needs
2. The school is able to meet these interests and needs
3. Practitioners have formed a relationship with each family
4. Children know, and like, the practitioners
5. Children are familiar and happy with their new school environment, its routines and expectations
6. Children have met and made friends with some of the other children who will be in their class

### **Getting to know the new children**

**Visit the pre-schools:-** Most children attend a pre-school setting and practitioners there will know them very well. One way we get to know the new child is to visit them in their pre-school and see them operating in an environment which they know, with staff that they trust. In the Summer Term, the Reception staff (AHT and Learning Mentor) spend time going to visit children in their preschools. If we cannot visit all the children, we ring the preschools to discuss the children and if they say we would benefit from coming to see a particular child, then we make the effort to do so.

**Play sessions in school:-** children can visit and play for an hour at a time, with a few of their friends. For children from outside the school, we invite in (with a parent) to come and join in with a free-flow session in Reception. This allows the children a chance to explore their new class and to meet some of the staff and children that will be coming to school with them.

**Home visits:-** We spend the first week of the Autumn Term carrying out home visits and making final preparations to the class environment. This visit is crucial as the starting point for building a relationship with the families, a time to exchange information and a further opportunity to gain a better understanding of the children.

### **Before the children arrive:-**

**Preparing the environment:-** Information gathered from the pre-schools, the families, the child and observations give the Reception staff a good picture of the new group of children. Staff can then prepare the environment to ensure that every child will have a wide choice of activities and also that routines and expectations are established from day one. For example, coat pegs, self-registration, resource storage and labels must all be ready so that we can teach routines on the first day.

**Induction:-** The induction period is carefully planned to ensure the children remain happy and confident at this time. Once we have some knowledge of the children, we decide on how the children are group together. We have 2 halves of the week with the first group of 15 children staying for 2 ½ days and the second 15 starting with us on Wednesday afternoon and staying to the end of the week.

This model means that in the vital first few days, we have a maximum of 15 children in each class with all the staff, meaning the children get quality adult attention and that routines and expectations are established immediately. This allows initial assessments to be completed with confidence. Parents also play a crucial part during the induction period. We encourage them to stay with their child for as long as necessary, which will vary from child to child, and they help teach the routines too. This is especially valuable for children with English as an additional language as the parent can translate the messages from the staff

**Induction into Nursery is similar to that in Reception but children are staggered in over the course of 2 weeks instead of one.**

1<sup>st</sup> Monday – FT Funded children to start (mornings only for the first week – pick up at 12.15pm)

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday – FT Top up children to start (mornings only for the first week) – pick up at 12.15pm

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday – Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday children to start (mornings only for the first week) – pick up 12.15pm

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday – Wednesday/Thursday/Friday children start (afternoons only for the first week) – drop off at 12.30pm

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday– all children at regular patterns (children will only start their regular patterns if they are fully settled)