

Hipsburn Primary School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

September 2025



Our School Vision:

"The most valuable gift we can give a learner is to enable them to think for themselves, to care for others and thereby acquire a sense of self-worth and confidence which can be used to benefit both society and the individual."

Introduction

"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."

(Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory framework, January 2024)

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Hipsburn Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS 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.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to build upon that prior learning experience. This is done through a holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents, carers, support staff and the EYFS team work effectively together to support the learning and development of the children in their care. At Hipsburn, our Preschool provides for the youngest children from the term after their second birthday and they may join the Reception Class in the Autumn term following their fourth birthday (space permitting and in accordance with our Admissions Policy).

Key Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

- importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

(Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory framework, January 2024)

In addition, to the above principles at Hipsburn we offer the following principles:

- Ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- The planning and environment reflects individual needs and builds on what children already know, supporting all children, no matter their starting point.
- Acknowledges the importance of working in partnership with parents and carers, sharing children's achievements and when there may be concerns.

Aims

This policy aims to ensure that at Hipsburn we:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment, which is sensitive to the needs of the child including those with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers and value their contributions.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs.

Legislation

This policy is based upon requirements set out on the 2024 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework.

Structure of EYFS

The EYFS at Hipsburn Primary School has two classes, Preschool (Warkworth Castle Class) and Reception (Alnwick Castle Class). All staff teaching in the EYFS hold relevant EY qualifications of Level 2 or above and an appropriate ratio of staff have their paediatric first aid qualifications.

Hipsburn Preschool cares for children aged between 2-4years. To support parents and carers we offer a range of options for children to attend Preschool. Parents and carers can select the following options:

- morning sessions (Monday - Friday 9.00am-12.00noon) and / or afternoon session (Monday - Thursday 12.00noon-3.00pm including lunch with the option of having a school dinner for an additional cost). These sessions can be mixed and matched as full days are also an option.
- Changes may be made to a child's original agreed sessions, provided the changes are long term.
- Children can attend Hipsburn Preschool from the term after they turn 2 years old (depending on numbers and ratio of staff available).
- 30 hours funding (where parents and carers are eligible)

For eligible parents and carers, 30 hours funding may be split between different providers.

As children move to Reception they will attend full days, which are 8.45m - 3.15pm, from the start of the Autumn term.

Funding and Finance

We take both eligible funded 2 year olds and 30 hour funded 3-4 year olds in our Preschool provision. For non-funded / children accessing additional hours there is a fee according to a child's age. All paid sessions are invoiced at the beginning of each half term. Payments are due within 14 days. Missed sessions due to holidays or illness will not be refunded.

Learning and Development

Our school follows the 2024 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development. There are three prime areas which must be embedded for a child to then progress into the specific areas.

The Prime areas are;

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

The Specific areas are:

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

The EYFS Curriculum – learning through play

At Hipsburn, we do not make a distinction between work and play. Children learn through planned play activities and staff will decide when child-initiated, continuous provision or adult-led play activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities.

For the younger children there is a strong focus on the three prime areas. The role of the teacher is key to progressing children's skills through play and meaningful interactions.

The learning environment is designed to enable children to explore, challenge and consolidate their own learning. This helps build their independence, resilience and confidence they need to be lifelong, reflective learners.

We encourage children to explore their environment both indoors and outside. The Hipsburn Primary and Preschool Woodland Area provides a safe outdoor space for children to use natural materials, to explore, construct, create and share. Outdoor clothes are available so children are not limited by seasons or weather.

Children are encouraged to follow their interests and staff aim to further learning opportunities by following children's interests.

Staff thoroughly understand the curriculum requirements for the early years and are skilled in adapting and developing plans to meet the specific needs and

interests of individual children as they develop. Current plans are on display and staff will be happy to explain them and discuss ideas when appropriate.

Visits and visitors are valued, to extend the experience of young children. Volunteers are encouraged to help on a regular or occasional basis. If you are able to share a particular interest or expertise, please talk to a member of staff.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive.

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is always informed by observations we have made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs. All staff that work in the EYFS are involved in this process, but the Key Person has specific responsibility for their children. The planning within the EYFS is based around the children's interests. These plans are used by the EYFS team as a guide for weekly planning, but we alter these in response to the needs of the children.

We make ongoing assessments of children's learning and use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified next steps in their development. Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of incidental observations, these may be recorded on their on-line interactive learning journal 'Tapestry'. This also enables on-going communication between school and parents and carers.

Children in reception are assessed against the Read Write Inc phonic bands on a half-termly basis and progress is monitored by the class teacher and the school Reading Leader to determine the appropriate groupings.

Parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the EYFS Team in Preschool during 'Stay and Play' sessions each term. We also provide a written report at the end of each academic year.

Children accessing their 2 year old provision will receive the statutory check between the age of 2 and 3. This is based around the prime areas of learning and will summarise the strengths of the child and include a target to work towards. This is shared with parents and carers. If any concerns are identified, the check can also be shared with the child's health visitor.

The reception year contains two statutory assessments: the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA), completed within the first 6 weeks and the EYFS Profile, completed at the end of the summer term to assess children against the Early Learning Goals (ELGs). Pupils are assessed against all 17 ELGs indicating whether they are meeting expected levels of development, or are not yet reaching expected levels. The profile reflects the ongoing assessments and discussions with parents and carers. Parents and carers are offered opportunities to meet with their child's teacher to discuss their learning and development twice across the year, but we welcome parents and carers to arrange additional appointments if needed. During the summer term parents and carers also receive a written report, sharing their child's progress against and ELG outcomes.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The delivery of the curriculum incorporates the characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and Exploring - engagement

Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and while they do so, children make the deepest learning connections. Playing with their peers can be just as important for children's development.

- Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences which help them make sense of the world.
- They have the opportunity to practise skills, develop ideas and think creatively alongside other children, as well as individually.
- The children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.
- They have the opportunity to express fear, or re-live anxious experiences, in controlled and safe situations.

- Active Learning - motivation

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children love to learn through physical and mental challenges. Children need to have 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. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.

- Creativity and Thinking Critically - thinking

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adults can support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. It enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

The Learning Environment

We offer:

- An indoor Preschool room linked by cloakrooms to our Reception Classroom
- French windows opening to an enclosed play area with tarmac and grass, planters, a covered gazebo, willow shelters and garaging for mobile toys
- A large storage hut leading to an enclosed woodland area
- Accessible toilet and nappy changing area nearby
- Access to the school hall for dance, indoor games and whole school events
- Access to the large school grounds, including a sports field, large areas for mobile toys, climbing towers, climbing tyres, an allotment and further woodland
- Access in walking distance to Alnmouth, Lesbury, Bilton, Alnmouth Station, Alnmouth estuary and beach, farmland and marshes.

Inclusion

In the EYFS we set personal next steps which reflect the needs of each individual child. This is achieved by planning to meet the needs of all genders, social and cultural backgrounds, ethnic groups, children with special educational needs and disabilities, children of all abilities and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We work in line with the SEND Code of Practise (2015) and strongly believe that early identification of need is crucial to supporting child development. Any concerns around developmental progress are always discussed with parents and carers at the earliest stage. The school SENCO is called upon for further advice and information. Please see further details in the schools Inclusion Policy for SEND.

We meet the individual needs of children through:

- Planning experiences and opportunities which build on children's current knowledge, skills and experiences, developing their self confidence and self-esteem.
- Adapt teaching strategies in response to individual needs.
- Motivate and support children by providing a variety of learning opportunities which reflect their learning styles and interests.
- Use resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination.
- Planning challenging learning opportunities and activities for those children working at greater depth.
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action promptly to support them as necessary.

Partnerships

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the schools and parents and carers to work closely in our EYFS Unit. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development, but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will hold an informal parent consultation early in the autumn term to establish how their child is settling into the school environment.
- We will send home an interactive 'Tapestry' Learning Journal designed to enable staff and parents and carers to record outstanding achievements.
- We encourage parents and carers to add to children's learning journals 'Tapestry' at least on a half termly basis.
- We will update the Hipsburn Primary School and Preschool website with newsletters, plans, policies and photos.
- We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We will support parents and carers to enable them to become familiar with the teaching methods used in school, to make it easier to emulate them at home.

- We will invite parents and carers to another informal consultation in the spring term to inform parents and carers of their child's progress.
- We will invite parents and carers to visit the school informally for topic celebrations and special events throughout the year.
- We will write a written report for their 2 year old check and at the end of each year to inform parents and carers formally of their child's results and overall progress.
- We encourage parents to talk to their child's Key Person / teacher if they have any concerns.

Transition from Home to Preschool

- Each child and their parents and carers will be invited to spend some time in Hipsburn Primary School in order to familiarise themselves with both the staff and the EYFS environment.
- The 2 year old check will be discussed, together with any specific provision or support needed.
- Initially, parents and carers will be invited to discuss their child's progress.
- Prior to starting Preschool, children and their parents and carers are invited for taster sessions as a 'Stay and Play'.
- Children may begin shortened sessions if appropriate until they are ready to attend a full session.

Transition from Preschool to Reception

Throughout the year, sessions are shared, e.g., linked topic learning and events, special assemblies. Outdoor and indoor play sessions are shared across the academic year. Staff regularly work alongside colleagues throughout the school so that children are familiar with all adults.

During the Summer Term, prior to starting school the following September:

- Reception staff visit Preschool settings from which September's intake will be taken.
- Children are offered taster days.
- Parents and carers are invited to see their new environment, meet staff and ask questions.
- Routines of the Reception day are discussed and tried so that expectations are familiar and the transition is as seamless as possible.
- The achievements, progress and needs of each child are discussed with families, the Key Person and Reception staff, the School SENCO and Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where appropriate, support is put in place prior to starting school full time.

- Towards the end of Reception children take part in more adult led activities to prepare them for Year 1.
- Reception children take part in a whole school transition where they spend time in preparation for Year 1, visiting their new classroom and spending time with their new teacher.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which is available on the school website.

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.

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 of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and carers will be asked to provide that permission when their child joins Hipsburn Primary School. Please see our Intimate Care Policy for details.

Supporting Independence and Self-Care

At the start of their nursery journey, all children are encouraged to develop independence. Promoting independence supports the development of resilience, builds confidence, and prepares children to take responsibility for themselves. These are essential skills that contribute to school readiness and benefit children throughout their lives.

Self-care is a key aspect of developing independence. Simple tasks such as putting on shoes or a coat, removing a jumper, and washing hands are important daily activities through which children can practise and develop independence. In the weeks leading up to their nursery start date, parents and carers are encouraged to support their child in learning these basic self-care tasks, helping them to be nursery ready.

Toilet training is a significant developmental milestone during the Early Years. At nursery, guidance from ERIC (The Children's Bowel and Bladder Charity) is followed to ensure parents and carers receive the most up-to-date, evidence-based advice. ERIC provides guidance for families and professionals to support children's healthy development in this area.

According to ERIC, the optimal time to stop using nappies is typically between 18 and 30 months of age, as this supports bladder and bowel health. Therefore, it is expected that many children will be toilet trained prior to starting nursery.

If a child is not yet toilet trained, it is advised that the process is started as early as possible. ERIC guidance recommends not waiting for children to 'show signs' of readiness, but instead beginning the process once a child can sit independently. To support children in making the most of their time in nursery, parents and carers are advised to begin toilet training prior to their child's start date, unless there is a medical reason not to do so.

Parents and carers can access further advice through ERIC's *Let's Go Potty* guidance, and the EYFS team is available to provide support throughout the process. Once toilet training has begun, it is recommended that children attend Preschool in pants or knickers to help them recognise the sensations associated with toileting and to support their learning.

For further discussions about toilet training prior to a child's start date, parents and carers are encouraged to contact the school office, where a member of staff will be available to provide guidance.

Additional support is also available through the Health Visiting team and can be accessed by calling **0300 373 2488** or emailing **spocnorthumberland@nhs.net**.

Monitoring Arrangements

It is the responsibility of the EYFS lead to monitor and update this policy. The Head teacher and subject leaders will carry out monitoring of the EYFS in the annual self review.

Date of last review: September 2025

Date of next review: September 2026

Signed: (Head Teacher)

Signed:(Governors)