

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



The Halifax Academy

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That staff deliver and EYFS curriculum through immersion in high quality teaching alongside and enriched environment
- That we nurture every child’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning developing skills, knowledge and confidence as they explore their first steps on their own unique journey of life-long learning
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning through so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- A close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- Every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the [2021 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their reception year. The Academy’s Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 4 and 5. At the Academy we have a 60 place Reception unit. We have two reception classes with 30 children in each class. To ensure best practice we have two adults, one teacher and one teaching assistant attached to each class. In addition to this we have support staff who also work within the classes and provide extra support and intervention where needed.

Structure of the day in EYFS

Morning	Organisation
8.25-8.35	Welcome at the door – registration
8.35-8.50	Maths Meeting
8.50-9.15	Phonics

9.20-10.35	Continuous Provision (Balanced of focussed, child initiated and independent time both indoors and outdoors)
10.40-11.15	Maths Shared input and small group work
11.15-11.25	Vocabulary session
11.25-11.30	Get ready for lunch
11.30-12.15	Lunchtime
Morning	Organisation
12.20-12.40	Squiggle whilst you wiggle and toothbrushing
12.45-1.15	Literacy Shared input and small group work
1.15-2.10	Continuous Provision (Balanced of focussed, child initiated and independent time both indoors and outdoors)
2.15-2.40	Story, singing, PSHE, celebration of learning
2.45	Home time

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2021 EYFS statutory framework.

Our curriculum encompasses the seven areas of learning and development. All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming good relationships and thriving.

These are called the **PRIME AREAS**:

- **communication and language**
- **physical development**
- **personal, social and emotional development**

Four area help children to strengthen and apply the prime areas.

These are called the **SPECIFIC AREAS**;

- **literacy**
- **mathematics**
- **the world**
- **expressive arts and design.**

Throughout their time in the Reception year, our children partake in an ambitious curriculum, which is designed in a sequential way to ensure progress towards the end of reception goals.

Curriculum Experiences

At The Halifax Academy we pride ourselves in offering our youngest children many memorable experiences such as: going to the theatre, a farm, a church or simply a ride in the minibus around the local environment. The Educational programmes from EYFS statutory framework 2021 states, "The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them".

We **understand** and **recognise** the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years 2021 and continue these into Year 1.

- **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

The focus of the CoEL is on **how children learn** rather than what they learn i.e. process over outcome. Underpinning the CoEL is the understanding that during their earliest years, children form attitudes about learning that will last a lifetime. Children who receive the right sort of support and encouragement during these years will be creative and adventurous learners throughout their lives. Children who do not receive this sort of support and interaction are likely to have a much different attitude about learning later on in life. Hence, why the supportive practitioner, and the environment they provide, need to nurture these CoELs to occur.

We have 10 animals that bring the CoEL alive in Phase one, children receive stickers, certificates and postcards home when staff observe children displaying these learning behaviours in class

- Exploring Elephant – **for being an amazing explorer**
- Go for it Gorilla – **For having a go and trying something new**
- Slinky Linky Snake – **For making links in your learning**
- Creative Chameleon – **for having your own ideas**
- Choosing chimp – **for choosing different ways to do things**
- Concentrating Crocodile – **for joining in and concentrating**
- Persevering parrot – **for not giving up when things get hard**
- Proud Peacock – **for begin proud of what you do**
- Analysing Alligator – **for working things out**
- Reflecting Rhino – **for reflecting on your progress**



4.1 Planning and Teaching

Our approach is influenced by the word of educationalists, researches, psychologists and practitioners who have guided our knowledge of how young children learn and how adults can support their learning.

“Knowledgeable practitioners appreciate that adult-led learning offers a child something different from, but complementary to, child led learning and it is one without the other that leads to an impoverished educational experience”. Fisher 2016.

At The Halifax Academy provision is underpinned by a complementary relationship between adult led, adult initiated and child led learning.

We are ambitious in our approach using a continuous cycle of observation and assessment, planning/teaching, alongside structured and systematic lesson and guided group work. We are also led by children’s interests so they are enthused to explore, investigate and discover for themselves

Shared Input

Three times a day as a whole class covering the specific areas of literacy, math’s and phonics.

Adult Directed focussed groups

Short focused groups are planned for and immediately follow a shared input. These sessions are planned with care, meeting the needs of all children, using prior knowledge of the child's learning experiences and the non-statutory guidance from the EYFS document 'Development Matters', 2021.

Continuous Provision

"To continue the provision for learning in the absence of an adult". Alistair Bryce-Clegg 2013

Indoors and outdoors resources are organised to develop children's skills in personal interaction and exploration and are linked to current assessment data. Resources are carefully selected to meet the development needs of the children in order to enhance potential for new learning and consolidate prior learning. Resources are dressed/displayed to reflect children's interests – enabling discovery, investigation and exploration. Continuous provision transcends all areas of learning and provides children with the opportunity to demonstrate the three characteristics of effective learning. Children are given the freedom to make independent choices and are encouraged to be active learners and take control of their own learning.

Reading at The Halifax Academy

Phonics

Systematic synthetic phonics is taught daily using the validated phonics programme 'Supersonic Phonic Friends'. Children read in class and take home phonetically decodable books matched to their current level of phonic knowledge. Children start phonics as soon as they start school. This may be Phase 1 to begin with concentrating on sounds in the environment, rhyme and oral blending

Reading

In EYFS, we want our children to develop love for reading. Therefore, it is important that reading is a feature inside and outside the classroom. We have a range of ways in which we promote reading:

- Having enthusiastic staff who share their passion and excitement of books with children. Children are read to at least 3 times a day.
- Book corners that are stimulating as well as being accessible and loved by children in each classroom.
- Using core books to plan for children's interests and class topics.
- In EYFS we have a core book list that we read to the children throughout the year. The books are selected under the heading of traditional tales, quality learning text, rhyme and repetition, health and well-being and diversity. 'Five Favourites' are then selected and revisited many times throughout the year
- Children have the opportunity to read to an adult using phonetically decodable reading books once a week. Reading records communicate reading progress between home and school, and include teachers' and parents' feedback.
- Tales Toolkit to support the children in structuring a story. Tales Toolkit provides interactive, child-led resources all using easy to remember symbols to represent story structure.
- Having well planned, shared reading sessions that all EYFS practitioners are confident to take part in.
- Opportunities for children to learn from clearly modelled 'reading behaviours', for example, the recognition that print conveys meaning, the left to right directionality of English text, the purpose of punctuation and so on.
 - Involving parents in understanding the importance of early literacy through parents' workshops, modelling during "soft start", newsletters, home shared reading and reading books.
- Listening to and joining in a variety of genres, for example, non-fiction, poems (poetry basket), audio stories, rhymes.
- Weekly visit to the school library to choose a book to take home for parents to read

- Visits to the local library.

Handwriting

Mark making and speech provide children with powerful tools for thinking, reasoning and problem solving. Time, space and attention is given to children's mark making, mathematical graphics, drawing and writing experiences. Throughout each day, children have opportunities for spontaneous mark making, drawing and writing in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Resources are carefully chosen, well organised and attractively presented, so that children can decide independently how they want to represent their ideas and which medium would best suit their purpose. High value is placed upon their imagination, ideas and self-expression demonstrated by the children, these are reflected by the adults and used as starting points for planning

Handwriting development in our EYFS includes a wide variety of activities planned to develop the fine motor skills required for the correct pencil grip. Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle is an early writing program created by a Shonette Bason-Wood. Squiggle Whilst You Wiggle incorporates dance, music and large movements to help children develop the fine muscle control they need for writing. They will learn a new gross motor movement to a piece of music while holding 'flappers' (pieces of fabric) while dancing along to the music. The children then transfer these movements to floor level and swap their flappers for writing tools (crayons/pens etc) to make marks, this could be in foam, on paper, in sand etc. They will then use this action to think of letters they can form that use this shape. These sessions are great fun but most importantly help children to be confident mark makers. Later on, children take part in 'Funky Finger' activities such as threading, using tweezers, dough gym, weaving. The list is endless.

Mathematics

Our objective is to ensure that all children develop firm mathematical foundations in a way that is engaging, and appropriate for their age. This means actively learning using resources and activities provided in the environment.

In addition, maths is explicitly taught daily as short whole class maths sessions using the Mathematics Mastery Programme. Children also take part in a daily maths meeting. These are used to consolidate key maths learning for about 15 minutes a day outside the maths lesson. Maths Meetings provide an opportunity to teach and revise 'general knowledge maths' which may not explicitly be covered during the maths lesson, and also allows the daily integration of maths into the surrounding environment. This means that pupils are practising concepts and skills on a regular basis, meaning they are continually building on their mastery of these concepts.

Shared exploration of language

At The Halifax Academy, we believe the key to success in reading is communication. Research clearly shows that the level of development in language and communication is the greatest predictor of success in life.

Within the EYFS communication and language development is a prime area of learning.

At school children use language to:

- Build strong relationships,
- Communicate their ideas and their feelings.
- Think creatively and critically.
- As a tool for learning.
- Become confident with the written word.

(Julie Fisher, 2016)

The development of a young child's communication and language comes primarily from tuning in to conversations that are meaningful to the child.

Within our setting interactions between children and adults will look like this:

- Tuning in to what is happening or a child's thinking.
- Showing genuine interest.
- Respecting children's own decisions and choices.
- Inviting children to elaborate.
- Recapping on what has happened so far.
- Offering personal experience.
- Clarifying ideas.
- Reminding.
- Using specific praise e.g., that is a good idea because...
- Offering an alternative viewpoint.
- Speculating/ using 'I wonder if...'

The definition of teaching in the Early Years as stated by OFSTED (2015); Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term which covers the many 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.

Alongside quality interactions, rich and varied experiences ensure language provides the foundation of thinking and learning.

Improving young children's vocabulary is paramount. Exploring and extending pupil's vocabulary is part of everyday teaching. Lessons are planned to enrich vocabulary and incidental opportunities are exploited. Vocabulary is discussed with the intention of building background knowledge so pupils can comprehend the context of a text.

Hierarchy of vocabulary

Areas of the continuous provision have a vocabulary pyramid. This starts with 'words in everyday speech, familiar to most children, 'high frequency words found in many different contexts and low frequency words which are domain specific. These words are related to each of the areas. Practitioners model these words whilst they are interacting with the children in the areas. Children then take ownership of these words and use them when communicating with each other.

5. Assessment

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). We also record our own baseline data for the prime areas.

In the first half term, the majority of our planning is focussed on the three-prime area based upon the results from our baseline data. Key people spend quality time getting to know the children and their families.

Practitioners meet with parents after their child has had 6 weeks in school. They discuss how the child has settled in and what they have observed. This is a snapshot of a child's starting points and is a joint assessment with the parents of the child. The practitioner will refer to the checkpoints in Development Matters, checking children's development in the Prime Areas. These discussions with parents about how their child is settling in will be used to help notice children who may need extra help.

Next steps from children's starting points are usually linked to how the children have settled into Reception or anything of significance e.g toilet training. If children settle in quickly and engage in a wide range of play in the first few weeks, there will be no needs to set out, 'next steps'.

Once children have settled and can access the reception environment, we begin thinking with more detail about how they will access the curriculum and we support learning around their own children's interests. For those children who settle quickly and are confident, we can move into using the wider curricular goals quickly.

If we notice that a child might be having difficulties with their development, we will take action quickly. It is important that we get to know and understand these 'vulnerable starters' so we can spend time observing them closely and reflecting on what we notice. We will continue to develop a strong relationship with parents/carers, supporting them to also give their children the help they need. The curriculum for these children will remain ambitious and inclusive. It is important that we focus on support, scaffolding and helping children overcome barriers to their learning. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

Our Objectives:

Dialogue with parents, so that we can work in a respectful partnership to support children's learning at home and at school.

Dialogue with children, focused on how they learning, to promote metacognitive thinking.

Early identification of children who need temporary help, and children who may have special educational needs.

Checking that individual children, and groups of children are making progress and taking prompt actions where this is not the case.

Reporting formally to parents and to the receiving Year one teacher in the summer so that children can continue their journey through phase one as seamlessly as possible.

We are not driven by assessment and tracking. Most assessment is formative, so that it quickly helps us to make a difference to children's learning. However, we also need an overview of children's progress, so that we can take further actions where needed, and so we can monitor equalities. The information is collected on a spreadsheet. Senior leaders work with class teachers and the whole team to analyse the information in order to take actions for individual children, or groups of children, as needed

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to the Development Matters [guidance](#)) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

6. Working with parents

Parents/carers are the first and most important influence on their child's development and future outcomes. Children have two main educators in their lives – their parents/carers and their teachers. Therefore, school and the parents/carers all have crucial roles to play. The impact is greater if they work in partnership.

At The Halifax Academy, parents/carers are invited to be involved every step of the way in their child's journey in education. Beginning with a pre-starting school meeting and an invitation for their children to attend several 'transition' sessions and a home visit before the Autumn term commences.

Practitioners record significant observations in the floor book or on Tapestry. The child's struggles or perseverance will be made clear. It will include characteristics or learning and the child's voice. The teaching input will also be documented. The entry will describe what the practitioner did to support or extend the child's learning and how the child responded. Tapestry enhances this special time in a child's life and captures experiences and can be shared with the whole family.

Throughout the families are invited to 'family learning' session. This supports the parents in supporting their children at home with key aspects such as phonics, writing and maths.

We pride ourselves on building positive relationships with families. We create an environment that is conducive to interactions where all feelings can be taken into account. A warm welcome each day often leads to deeper knowledge and understanding of each child and their family. Fisher 2006 states, "It is knowing the child and family that opens up endless possibilities for interactions that deepen the emotional bonds between a practitioner and a child, and lead, in turn, to educational opportunities to support and extend learning.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

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. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance and adhere to the Academy's safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school and participate in the free fruit and milk for under-fives scheme. For our Reception children, we provide the universal infant free school meal and the menu is regularly monitored with the chef. We cater for those children who have special dietary requirements and have systems in place ensuring that all children receive the correct meal. Fresh water is readily available for all children and we encourage children to bring in water bottles with water only. Children are taught the importance of keeping clean and washing their hands correctly.

The children brush their teeth daily following the Calderdale Supervised Toothbrushing Programme. All staff have received training and the programme is regularly audited from the Locala Team in Calderdale. This is inline with [statutory guidance](#) for safety around supervised tooth brushing.

The majority of staff members in the EYFS unit are Paediatric first aid trained and have completed Level 2 Food Hygiene certificate.

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed and approved by Sarah Halstead (Phase Leader) every year.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy