Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework for children from birth to five years of age. It is based upon four overarching principles:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships
3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning and Development

At Heronshaw School, our Early Years provision begins in the Nursery class (from 3 years old) and continues through the Foundation Stage to our Reception class. We follow the EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers and aim to provide high-quality education and care that enables every child to learn, develop and thrive.

The Nursery and Reception staff work closely together as part of a team, ensuring a consistent and seamless approach from the age of 3 until the end of the Foundation Stage. Children benefit from access to shared spaces, including the garden, shared areas, and main playground, experiencing a wide range of learning opportunities through continuous provision. This collaborative approach supports smooth transitions between Nursery and Reception.

EYFS staff plan and work together to ensure continuity and progression, providing age- and stage-appropriate activities to suit all our children. Children are also taught within their own class groups, in a variety of ways: whole-class teaching, small group work, pairs, and individually. For phonics, children are assessed and grouped according to their developmental stage and assessment outcomes.

In both Nursery and Reception, we recognise the potential for learning in every activity and situation. Our aim is to provide a secure, stimulating environment where children flourish, feel valued, and develop the confidence to become active, independent, and curious learners. From the earliest starting point at 3 years old, children are encouraged through first-hand experiences, play, and discussion to explore, ask questions, and develop problem-solving skills in meaningful ways. They interact with others, move freely, and engage in carefully planned and well-resourced learning opportunities. Alongside structured provision, children are supported in spontaneous, self-chosen activities that allow creativity and independence to thrive.

We believe it is vital that children experience success, enjoyment, and a genuine sense of achievement as they learn and grow, from their very first days in Nursery through to the end of the Foundation Stage.

EYFS AREAS OF LEARNING

The Early Years Foundation Stage is a curriculum from birth to five years old, we follow the strands set by this curriculum and concentrate the learning opportunities on the seven areas of learning (3 Prime and 4 Specific) which are:

PRIME AREAS	SPECIFIC AREAS

Communication and Language Personal Social Emotional Development Physical Development	Literacy Mathematics Understanding of the World Expressive Arts and Design

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. Through play and practical experiences children learn about the world and their place in it. They learn through first-hand experiences, talk, books and equipment. We set realistic yet challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of all children including, children with special educational needs, children working at greater depth, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Personal, Social and Emotional Development is a prime area of learning and underpins children's ability to thrive in school and the wider world. At Heronshaw, children are supported to build positive relationships, share, take turns, cooperate, and resolve conflicts constructively. Independence is promoted through opportunities to make choices and take responsibility for their actions, while children are guided to show empathy, respect, and understanding for others' feelings, cultures, and beliefs. Through these experiences, children develop confidence, resilience, and a positive self-image. The *Herons' Values* are embedded through our Social, Moral, Spiritual, and Cultural (SMSC) curriculum, fostering a strong moral foundation, appreciation of diversity, and a sense of belonging within the community.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical Development is a prime area of learning and supports children's health, well-being, and readiness for learning. Children develop fine and gross motor skills through structured activities such as PE lessons, movement to music, and the use of varied equipment, as well as through daily active play indoors and outdoors. Initiatives like *Dough Disco* strengthen fine motor control and pencil grip, while children are encouraged to take risks, solve physical challenges, and explore their capabilities. Opportunities to manage self-care, including dressing, hygiene, and making healthy choices, support independence and resilience, laying the foundations for lifelong health and well-being.

Children are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles through learning about nutrition, physical activity, personal hygiene and good oral health. For example, children learn about the importance of brushing their teeth twice daily, reducing sugary foods and drinks, drinking water regularly and making healthy food choices. Staff promote discussions around healthy eating, use stories, role play and themed activities to explore oral hygiene, and encourage children to understand how looking after their teeth contributes to their overall health and wellbeing.

COMMUNICATION and LANGUAGE

Communication and Language is a prime area of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and underpins all aspects of development. At Heronshaw, we prioritise speaking and listening as essential skills for self-expression, social interaction, and understanding the world. Children's vocabulary is extended through story time, rhymes, role-play, group discussions, and interactive storytelling, alongside opportunities to share experiences and express ideas through imaginative play. Provision such as puppets, music, and rhyme supports fluency, confidence, and a love of language, while purposeful dialogue develops active listening, turn-taking, questioning, and problem-solving. These skills form the foundation for literacy, wider learning, and positive relationships, enabling children to become independent and curious learners.

LITERACY

Literacy is a specific area of learning built on communication, language, and physical development. At Heronshaw, children develop early reading and writing through independent mark-making, structured phonics teaching using *Read Write Inc.*, and carefully planned shared and guided sessions. Pre-writing activities, *Dough Disco*, and *Drawing Club* stimulate creativity and build fine motor control. A strong reading culture is fostered through daily story sessions, access to high-quality texts, and home reading linked to phonics progress. Targeted interventions, including

one-to-one tutoring and *Hold a Sentence*, ensure all children make rapid progress, becoming confident, independent, and enthusiastic readers and writers.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics provides the foundations for numeracy and problem-solving. Children develop understanding through practical, hands-on activities supported by clear mathematical language. Early number, shape, space, pattern, and measurement concepts are introduced through nursery rhymes, games, and concrete resources before progressing to pictorial and abstract representations. Daily *Number Time* and targeted interventions build fluency and recall, while a mastery approach ensures depth of understanding. Towards the end of the Foundation Stage, children apply their skills to real-life contexts such as telling the time and solving simple problems, developing confidence and independence in mathematical thinking.

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD

Children are encouraged to explore, investigate, solve problems, and make decisions, developing curiosity about the world around them. They learn about living things, their environment, and people who are important in their lives. Computing skills are introduced through the use of laptops, iPads, and other modern technology, including programming activities, enabling children to gain confidence in digital literacy and develop problem-solving skills in a meaningful context.

Technology is used purposefully to support learning and exploration. Staff promote safe and appropriate use of technology and have regard to children's screen use, ensuring that technology enhances rather than replaces active, practical, social and outdoor experiences.

EXPRESSIVE ARTS and DESIGN

Expressive Arts and Design encourages children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings through art, design, technology, music, drama, dance, movement, and imaginative play. Children create paintings, drawings, collages, and models, and use musical instruments, while learning songs and rhymes to sing together. Colour recognition, mixing, sorting, and matching are embedded in creative activities. Opportunities to participate in school productions and assemblies further develop confidence, creativity, and self-expression, fostering a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

OUTSIDE

We have an outside learning space which children have access to each day. We have all weather clothing and footwear available, so children are protected and there are no barriers to learning. The outside area is an extension of the classrooms and there is a variety of resources to facilitate learning. In these areas EYFS staff provide planned activities for children as well as giving opportunities for them to make their own choices.

HOMEWORK

Children in Reception are encouraged to reinforce learning at home through regular Literacy and Mathematics activities. *Fab Phonics* books, including red and green words, are sent home weekly, along with reading books matched to each child's phonetic ability, with an expectation to read at least five times per week. In Mathematics, children use *NumBots* to support number fluency, recall, and problem-solving. These activities complement classroom learning, helping children consolidate skills, build independence, and take ownership of their learning.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILDREN

Children in the Foundation Stage are continuously observed and assessed by all staff to monitor progress across the seven areas of learning. Weekly adult-led sessions in literacy and mathematics allow teachers to evaluate understanding, identify gaps, and plan targeted support or extension activities.

When children enter Reception, they participate in the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) within the first six weeks of starting school. At the end of the Reception year, teachers complete the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP), which provides a well-rounded picture of each child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, attainment against expected levels, and readiness for Year 1. Assessment information is shared with parents/carers and Year 1 staff to support a smooth transition.

Progress is recorded and tracked using ARC accounts, with termly updates ensuring children remain on track and make sustained progress. Assessment informs planning, enabling timely interventions for those needing consolidation and providing challenge for children ready to move to the next stage of learning, ensuring all children

achieve their full potential. Ongoing assessment is based on practitioner observations, interactions with children, discussion with parents/carers and children's independent learning and achievements.

PHOTOGRAPHS/VIDEOS

At the beginning of the year parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to be photographed and/or filmed during their time at school. We use these images in the classroom, on displays, in the children's individual record books and on the school website. The use and storage of photographs and video recordings complies with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the school's Data Protection Policy. Parents/carers may withdraw consent in writing at any time.

PARENTS/CARERS AS PARTNERS

We value the involvement of parents in school. Parental involvement with school begins even before children start Foundation with an invitation to visit the school and meet their child's teacher. Parents are then invited into school in the Autumn term and Spring term for a consultation with their child's teacher. An end of year report is sent out at the end of the summer term and parents are invited into school to discuss this report if they wish. Parents are kept informed of all happenings in the school by the school website, texts, emails and our Facebook page. Parents are invited to attend workshops, stay and play sessions and other events throughout the year.

Parents and carers are recognised as children's first educators. Information shared by parents contributes to ongoing assessment and helps staff to understand each child's interests, experiences and achievements both at home and at school. We actively encourage parents and carers to share information that supports their child's learning and development.

KEY PERSON

In Nursery, each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that every child's care and learning are tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person supports positive relationships with families, helps children become familiar with the setting and provides a secure foundation for learning and development. In Reception, class staff work closely with children and families to provide continuity of care, support and communication.

ATTENDANCE AND CHILD ABSENCE

Regular attendance is essential to support children's learning, development, wellbeing and safeguarding. Parents and carers are expected to notify the school on the first day of any absence and keep the school informed of the reason for absence.

The school follows established attendance and safeguarding procedures to monitor attendance, identify patterns of concern and ensure children are safe. Any unexplained, persistent or prolonged absences will be followed up promptly and may be referred to appropriate agencies where required. The welfare of the child remains paramount at all times.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

Heronshaw School takes safeguarding and child protection responsibilities extremely seriously. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the welfare of the child is always paramount.
The school adheres to the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and follows the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Safeguard Children and local safeguarding partnership procedures. All staff receive appropriate safeguarding training, including regular updates, and understand their responsibility to identify, record and report concerns about a child or adult immediately.

The school has robust procedures for managing concerns about children's welfare, allegations against adults working with children and whistleblowing. Children are taught how to stay safe through age-appropriate learning opportunities, routines and discussions.

Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Further information can be found in the school's Child Protection Policy.

STAFFING AND SAFER RECRUITMENT

Heronshaw School is committed to safer recruitment practices and ensuring that all adults working with children are suitable to do so.

All staff, volunteers, students and regular visitors are subject to appropriate safeguarding, suitability and background checks, including enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where required. References are obtained and recruitment processes are conducted in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's Safer Recruitment Policy.

The school maintains appropriate staff-to-child ratios and ensures that staff are suitably qualified, experienced and supported through ongoing professional development.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

At Heronshaw School, all children are entitled to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum regardless of ability, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, social background or family circumstances.
We are committed to providing an inclusive environment where every child feels valued, respected and able to achieve their full potential. Learning opportunities are adapted to meet the needs of individual children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged children, children learning English as an additional language and children working at greater depth.

The school complies with the Equality Act 2010 and has a full Equality Information and Objectives Policy available on request.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)

Care is taken to assess the individual needs of every child from their entry into the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff work closely with parents/carers to identify any barriers to learning at the earliest opportunity and ensure appropriate support is put in place.

The school works in partnership with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCo), parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate to support children's learning and development. Individual support plans, targeted interventions and reasonable adjustments may be implemented to ensure all children can access the curriculum and achieve their full potential.

Parents/carers will always be consulted and informed if additional support or involvement from external professionals is required. Further information can be found in the school's SEND Policy.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

At Heronshaw School, all staff are familiar with the school's Health and Safety Policy, and designated Early Years staff hold current paediatric first aid qualifications in line with statutory requirements.

Children are taught to use equipment and materials safely, move carefully around school and recognise potential hazards. Safe eating practices are promoted during snack and mealtimes, and children are encouraged to develop independence in managing their personal safety and wellbeing.

Daily health and safety checks are undertaken, and suitable risk assessments are completed and reviewed for visits, educational visits, visitors, after-school activities and new learning environments. Appropriate supervision is maintained at all times. Where a child requires rest or sleep during the school day, appropriate supervision and monitoring arrangements are put in place in accordance with current safer sleep guidance. These measures ensure a safe, secure and well-managed environment where children can confidently explore, learn and develop.

ALLERGIES and MEDICAL NEEDS

Parents/carers are asked to inform us of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat, medical needs, children who require prescribed medication, including inhalers, antihistamines or adrenaline auto-injectors. A list of these allergies and medical needs is kept in each classroom, in the designated folder in the school office and all staff involved are informed. Medical forms are available in the school office and must be completed fully giving permission to administer any medication during school time.

SNACK TIMES

Children in the Foundation Stage are invited to attend the snack table during continuous provision. Healthy snacks are provided by the school. Children are supervised by staff at all times and individual dietary, allergy and medical requirements are carefully monitored. Snack times promote healthy eating, independence, communication and social development.

SAFE EATING AND CHOKING PREVENTION

At Heronshaw School, children's safety during snack and mealtimes is a priority. Children are appropriately supervised while eating and drinking, and staff promote safe eating practices, including sitting while eating, taking small bites, chewing food thoroughly and eating at an appropriate pace.

Snack and mealtimes are also used as opportunities to promote communication and language development. Staff model conversation, extend vocabulary and encourage children to talk about healthy lifestyles, nutrition, hydration and oral health.

Staff are aware of potential choking hazards and ensure food is prepared and served in an age-appropriate manner.

Examples of learning opportunities during snack time may include:

- Discussing where food comes from.
- Talking about healthy and less healthy foods.
- Counting pieces of fruit or comparing quantities.
- Encouraging children to express preferences and make choices.
- Developing independence through serving themselves and tidying away.

These experiences support children's personal, social and emotional development, communication and language skills, physical development and understanding of healthy lifestyles.

RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read alongside the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Administration of Medicines Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

Policy information	
Date of policy	September 2026
Policy author(s)	Megan Bolger
Role(s) of reviewer	Early Years Lead
Review date	August 2027
Published on website?	Yes
Additional notes *(if required)*	New addition of nursery (3&4 year olds)