

Vanguard Learning Trust



As a group of local primary and secondary schools, Vanguard Learning Trust's mission is to serve its local community by providing outstanding, inclusive education. We have a collective purpose and responsibility to provide effective teaching, through a curriculum based on equality of opportunity and entitlement that allows our students to shine both in and out of the classroom. Each school in the Trust has its own ethos, which also complements the Trust's vision and values, and the common aspiration that all students can achieve their potential.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy April 2024-2025

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1. Aims

This policy aims to ensure:

- That children access a broad and balanced curriculum that gives them the broad range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life
- Quality and consistency in teaching and learning so that every child makes good progress and no child gets left behind
- Close partnership working between practitioners and with 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 [statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) for 2023](#).

3. Structure of the EYFS

Our nursery class offers a separate morning and afternoon session for three hours each day for a maximum of 26 children in each session. They are eligible to enter once they have turned 3 years old. They can enter at any point during the academic year.

We have two reception classes catering for a total of 60 children. All children begin in the Autumn term.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. However, 3 areas known as the prime areas are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

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

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, practitioners working with the youngest children or those with a specific identifiable communication need are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas.

Our planning for Maths and English use specific schemes which we adapt for early years. Our plans always cover the whole class teaching input, a teacher led activity and class challenges that give the children opportunities to extend on and use their learning within their own independent play. We plan challenges and learning opportunities for both our indoor and outdoor areas. We also plan a wider curriculum around a topic question which the teachers can choose in collaboration with the children, to ensure a supportive and challenging curriculum coverage, taking into account the children's questions and interests specific to each cohort of children.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. 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. Structured interventions are also planned to further support and challenge children within their learning. We hold a weekly team meeting to plan interventions to support learning for specific children based on the prior week's teaching.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Practitioners respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

We introduce emotional regulation through fostering a growth mindset practises and zones of regulation. early on in the academic year to enable our children to build emotional resilience so that they keep trying to achieve and exceed the learning goal. Children who take on our additional challenges within their learning are celebrated in class via our class dojo award system on a daily basis. Star of the Week is also used to celebrate children's persistence and effort within their learning.

Children learn the importance of the Characteristics of Effective Learning, the ways they engage with other children and their environment, through Circle Time activities and class challenges. As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for year 1.

In Reception, Phonics is taught via Rusk Miskin's Read, Write, Inc. programme. We teach phonics daily for 30 minutes and children are placed into groups which are linked to their level of knowledge. These groups are assessed every half term. Structured interventions and opportunities for application also support children's learning. In Nursery, children are introduced to letter names and sounds through songs, actions and play.

Our English teaching is supported by a number of high quality and varied texts alongside other resources to support the teaching of writing, oracy, grammar and spelling. These include Picture News, DERIC and PiXL resources to support the teaching of structured writing. For Maths, we use learning from the White Rose programme, manipulatives and practical maths to support children's understanding. This is extended further through resources available from NCETM.

These subjects are taught daily but are also incorporated wider via cross curricular activities such as art, DT, drama, and role play based activities.

Children's learning is recorded and shared in a number of different ways. Each child, in Nursery and Reception, has an individual WOW learning folder, which holds child initiated learning, chosen by the child as a piece of work they are proud of. Children are then able to share the work and their experiences with their friends and parents during Stay and Play sessions. Every child also has an adult led book, which includes Literacy and Maths activities. In Reception, children have phonics books which they use daily to support their learning within the Read, Write Inc. programme.

Each class has a Topic and Maths floor book. This includes activities, verbatim quotes and pictures of the children and is used to show the class Learning Journey through the academic year.

5. Assessment

At Hermitage Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations, pictures and verbatim quotes are used to shape future planning. Practitioners also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers through half termly WOW sheets, where parents can share examples of how children have used their learning at home.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). 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 (On track/Working at)
- Not yet reaching expected levels (Not on track/Working towards)

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.

Phonics assessments are also carried out every half term. We formally record their progress every half term.

At Hermitage Primary School we also have a weekly team meeting in which we assess the children's progress against the learning objectives and plan interventions to support and extend any children who may require it.

6. Working with Parents

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's learning on a weekly basis. We use an electronic based system called Class Dojo to post pictures of the children's activities and learning at least three times a week. We also post our planned learning for the week ahead in order to allow Parents/carers to share their child's learning and support them at home with further suggested activities. Alongside this, we post an overview of learning each half term, life skills for parents to support their children with at home and other websites, resources and presentations

about how we teach the children at school. Using the Class Dojo app, parents are also able to share pictures, WOW moments and messages with the teachers.

Parents are encouraged to fill out a reading record on a daily basis and will highlight their child's success and difficulties within the chosen books. Books are changed weekly in the Early Years and children are read with 1 – 2 times throughout the week.

We have an open door policy for parents/carers to speak to their teacher with any concerns. They can also use the Class dojo system to communicate with their teacher if they are not able to meet in person. Similarly, if we have any specific concerns about a child's behaviour or progress we will ask Parents/carers to attend a meeting with the Teacher and Phase Leader.

Throughout the year, there are opportunities and events for Parents/carers to celebrate their child's learning, including Stay and Play sessions, Stay and Read, Show and Share and End of Topic celebrations. We formally hold two Parent/Teacher meetings per year. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We recognise that 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 safeguarding and welfare requirements to provide a welcoming, safe and stimulating environment where children are able to enjoy learning and grow in confidence.

We make sure that the appropriate statutory staff:child ratios are maintained in our setting to meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. For children aged 3 and over, for maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in maintained schools, we have at least 1 member of staff for every 13 children. For reception classes in maintained schools and academies we comply with infant class size legislation and have at least 1 teacher per 30 pupils

We have at least 1 person with a current paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate on the premises and available at all times when children are present, including on outings. This PFA certificate is renewed every 3 years as required.

We also promote good oral health, as well as good health in general, in the early years by teaching the children the importance of following a healthy lifestyle during PSHE lessons. We organise termly visits from a local dentist to teach and support the children and Parents/carers about:

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

They also provide resources to support with the importance of oral health at home. We follow [Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing](#) to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe.

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 Georgia Harling, Early Years Leader, every year.
At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Approval / Revision History

Revision date	By	Summary of Changes Made
September 2020	Amy Reeves	
September 2021	Amy Reeves	Additions of new Early Years reforms Changes to assessment and curriculum overview
February 2023	Amy Reeves	Changes to planning, use of Power of Reading/White Rose
April 2024	Georgia Harling	Updated statutory framework information, embedded links, updated information about where we source information from to inform planning