



WALTHAMSTOW HALL  
SEVENOAKS

## **EARLY YEARS POLICY**

### **Intent and Aims**

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

### **Intent – Implementation – Impact**

Within Early Years at Walthamstow Hall we aim to:

- Give each pupil a happy, positive and enjoyable start to their school life within a safe and secure environment.
- Establish solid foundations and foster a deep love of learning.
- Enable each pupil, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually in order to thrive in a diverse and ever-changing world.
- Offer a broad and rich curriculum.
- Encourage pupils to develop independence, confidence and resilience within a nurturing and supportive environment.
- Help pupils to build positive relationships.

### **Implementation**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children from age 2 to 5 years.

At Walthamstow Hall we have Nursery, Pre-School and Reception classes. In Nursery and Pre-School staffing includes a Nursery Leader and appropriate number of assistants within ratio. The Reception class has a teacher and a teaching assistant. To ensure best practice and continuity, our foundation stage classes work closely together and share planning. Reception also prepares children for Key Stage 1.

### **The Curriculum**

Our Nursery and Pre-School class follow a creative curriculum over a 2-year topic cycle to ensure coverage. Reception follows a one-year cycle. We use the *Development Matters* (DfE, July 2021 [Development Matters](#)) guidance to support our curriculum with the flexibility to reflect the interests of the children and take full advantage of spontaneous learning opportunities. The EYFS Framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. The prime areas are:

**Communication and language:** Listening, Attention and Understanding, Speaking.

**Personal, Social and Emotional Development:** Self-regulation Managing Self, Building Relationships.

**Physical Development** Fine Motor, Gross Motor.

These are re-strengthened and applied through the following four areas which are referred to as the Specific areas:

**Literacy:** Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing.

**Mathematics:** Numbers and Numerical patterns.

**Understanding the World:** Past and Present, People, Culture and Communities.

**Expressive Arts and Design:** Creating with Materials, Being Imaginative and Expressive.

We enrich the Early Years Provision with our Forest School and Wellbeing curriculum to enhance the experience and opportunities available to the pupils. This includes special events and celebrations, memorable experiences, themes selected to drive the curriculum and the PSHE *Scarf* scheme. Our teaching of synthetic phonics is based on *Read, Write Inc* and our teaching of mathematics is guided by the *Power Maths*.

### Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the foundation stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. Therefore, we have environments that provide continuous provision. This starts in our Nursery and Pre-School where the classroom and outdoors are set up with learning areas. Each learning area has cross-curricular resources, which pupils can access independently. Reception and outdoor area are also set up with areas of learning, offering continuous provision to build upon and deepen experiences and learning from Nursery and Pre-School. Continuous provision provides pupils with stimulating, active play to encourage creative and critical thinking alongside other children, as well as on their own. Pupils are able to practice skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our pupils the opportunity to pursue their own interest, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The pupils learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling and questioning. They teach and extend play whilst developing skills and language.

We understand that outdoor play is of equal importance as indoor play and that the outdoor classroom offers children ‘bigger’, ‘louder’ and ‘messier’ experiences.

### Characteristic of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the ‘Characteristics of Effective Learning’ which help practitioners identify a child’s attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are:

- Playing and Exploring – pupils investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’.
- Active Learning – pupils concentrate and keep trying if they encounter difficulties, they enjoy achievements.

- Creating and Thinking Critically – pupils have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

### Teaching

We ensure there is a balance of child-initiated learning through continuous provision, and adult led activities, across the School day. The adults respond to each pupil's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the pupil is doing. In some cases, the adult will ask a pupil to complete a task with them; at other times they will participate in the pupil's play, extending it where possible. There are set routines that we follow each day. There are designated times when the pupils come together to be taught and we focus on math's, literacy, phonics, stories and topic work. These times provide the opportunity for pupils to develop their ability to work as a group to listen, to take turns, to answer and concentrate. Whole class reading and story time are important parts of the day. We want our pupils to develop a lifelong love of reading. Pupils are exposed to a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction texts to provide them with opportunities to hear and use new vocabulary. We imitate, innovate and invent stories through a Talk for Writing approach as we want our children to leave the EYFS knowing stories, both traditional and modern well. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story during the day, as well as opportunities to enjoy books within the continuous provision.

In Reception every pupil is provided with their own book bag and will receive a 'reading' book regularly. In School they will share this book with an adult on a one-to-one basis. They will also have the opportunity to select a book for enjoyment from the class book corner and School library.

### Planning

The EYFS Curriculum provides the basis for planning in our Early Years and Reception class (Foundation Stage). The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage are supported by the Development Matters Document. There are discrete lessons in phonics, reading, writing, maths, music, French, Computing and PSHE. Practitioners also follow pupils' interests, experiences and prior learning.

### Assessment

At Walthamstow Hall, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Practitioners observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are then used to inform future planning. Observations and assessments are recorded Termly. At the end of the EYFS (end of Reception), practitioners complete the Statutory EYFS profile for each pupil. Pupils are assessed against the 16 early learning goals, indicating whether they are;

- 'Expected' - meeting expected levels of development, or
- 'Emerging' - not yet reaching the expected levels of development.

Pupils' development levels are assessed as the year progresses. If a pupil's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the SENCO, Support staff and the pupil's parents/carers and agree how to support the pupil.

## Parent Partnership

We believe that education is a shared responsibility between School and home. We therefore work very closely to ensure that parents/carers are involved in their child's education and provide them with a weekly newsletter detailing what we are learning and how they can support their child at home.

We ensure that parents/carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development, through online learning journeys and parents evenings. We understand the importance of parents/carers views, so provide opportunities for feedback throughout the school year.

We offer workshops to provide parents with an insight into how we teach specific areas of the Early Years Curriculum, detailing ways in which they can support their child's learning at home. These sessions also give parents/carers the opportunity to work with their child in the School environment.

## Safeguarding

It is essential to us that all children in the School are safe. 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 educate pupils on the importance of boundaries, rules and limits and we encourage them to become responsible for their own behaviour by supporting them to make the right choices. We teach the pupils how to recognise and manage risks in a supervised learning environment. We aim to protect the physical and mental well-being of all pupils.

## Impact

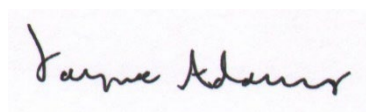
We recognise that every child is unique and that they develop and learn in different ways and at varying rates. We want all of our pupils to develop a positive attitude to learning and therefore we strive for our pupils to become curious, resilient and self-assured in order to prepare them for the next stage of education, laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

This policy has regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

***Walthamstow Hall policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.***

Reviewed: June 2023  
Next Review: June 2024

Signed:



Date: 30 June 2023

Mrs J Adams  
Chairman of the Governing Body