

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Overview of Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is an exciting time at Hughenden where through a supportive and engaging environment our young learners build on their talents. All children who start at Hughenden will be at different points on their learning journey and come to school with a wide range of life and learning experiences. Their next steps are carefully monitored, and teachers devote time to work with parents, carers and the children themselves in planning a curriculum that encompasses their interests and maximise their learning opportunities.

Foundation Stage Curriculum

Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage document 2012 can be found by clicking on this link:

<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf>

The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning. The Foundation Stage prepares children (aged 3- 5 years old) for learning in Key Stage 1 and is consistent with the Early Years Foundation Stage and areas of the National Curriculum. Inside and outside structured play is an essential part of the teaching and learning process in both. We all learn in different ways and at different rates. 'Playing and exploring', 'active learning' and 'creating and thinking critically' are vital learning characteristics that provide opportunities for learning.

There are seven areas of learning in the Foundation Stage Curriculum which comprises of three Prime areas and four Specific areas.

Prime areas –

- Communication and Language;
- Physical Development;
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Communication and Language

At Hughenden we help our children to become effective communicators by ensuring we have a learning environment that supports and enriches talk and vocabulary development both indoors and out. Children will explore, enjoy, learn about and use words in a broad range of contexts. They experience a rich variety of opportunities to develop confidence and skills in expressing themselves both verbally and through writing. The children develop their listening skills through the use of stories, songs, circle times, Philosophy for Children and in role play. This will help them to practise and extend the range of vocabulary and communication skills they use, and help them to listen carefully. Words and books are accessible in all learning areas set up indoors and outdoors with adults intervening to model the use of appropriate vocabulary, to listen to children's talk and to encourage further discussions and enrich conversations.

Physical Development

In both the indoor and outdoor environments the children are encouraged to develop both their gross and fine motor skills through opportunities to be active and interactive. The use of wheeled vehicles, small PE equipment, construction materials, large scale art projects and access to gardens, mud- kitchen, sand and water play all support children in developing their co-ordination. Children are encouraged to understand the importance of physical activity and what they need to do to be healthy and safe. They have free access to snacks of fruit, vegetables, milk and regular cooking opportunities which encourage children to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Through building close relationships with the key staff, children develop their social skills and learn to manage their own behaviour in a supportive environment through a wide and varied selection of activities, i.e. circle time, show and tell, stories and role play. All children are given opportunities to discuss their families, friends, ideas and feelings. It is important that each child feels valued, so that a strong self-image and self-esteem are promoted. When necessary, appropriate support is given to children to help them to form positive relationships and to develop respect for each other. High expectations of acceptable behaviour are continually addressed with the children. Social skills, co-operative play and learning to manage their feelings, in the context of the activities provided, supports children at all times. Positive praise is used to emphasise children's abilities to develop their confidence and self-worth.

Specific areas –

- Literacy;
- Mathematics;
- Understanding The World;
- Expressive Arts and Design

Literacy

Children have daily phonics teaching following the Read Write Inc. Programme where they are taught about individual letter sounds (phonemes) and how to use them for reading and writing. (Further information on schools website – “How we read at Hughenden”). Through a print rich environment we encourage children to use their emerging writing skills to express their ideas.

Mathematics

Mathematical development encompasses understanding and improvement of skills in the use of numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems and to describe shapes, spaces and measures. The children have many activities available in the indoor and outdoor areas which help them learn, support, enjoy, explore and challenge their mathematical understanding. The environments aim to be ‘number rich’ so that children appreciate that numbers are all around them and they can make mathematical links in cross curricular learning e.g. tallying house points, reading prices when shopping, weighing in cookery, seeing what time the café opens etc.

Understanding the World

This involves children making sense of their physical world and their community. The children have opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. This area incorporates science, geography, history, religious education and ICT. Children have access to laptops and computers in classrooms and in the computer suite, interactive whiteboards and a variety of ICT equipment, Bee-Bots, walkie-talkies, digital cameras and much more.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children are given opportunities to explore, play with and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design and technology, music, movement, dance and role play. To promote the children’s creativity the learning environments are well resourced to allow for collaborative and imaginative play to develop.