



HARBINGER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

September 2025

Scope of Policy: This policy applies to all staff, pupils and volunteers at Harbinger Primary School working in the EYFS

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Supporting documentation

(These documents guide our practice. They are available on the Harbinger shared area or ask at school office)

1: Nursery & Reception Timetables
2: Nursery & Reception Curriculum Year Maps
3: Nursery planning
4: Reception planning
5: 'What makes an enabling environment'?
6: Role of the adult
7: Risk Assessments for indoor and outdoor learning in EYFS
8: 6 steps to conflict resolution
9: What Makes Good assessment in EYFS
10: Language structures in the EYFS
11: Phonics in the EYFS

1. Introduction

'Every child is a unique child; who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers. Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development. They foster the characteristics of effective early learning - Playing and exploring, Active learning and creating and thinking critically'.

Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – Early Education 2012

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up'.

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage - setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (March 2021)

At Harbinger, our values are 'Together, Wellbeing and Learning'. These values underpin everything that we do at Harbinger. The aim of this Policy is for clarification on how pupils in the EYFS at

Harbinger school are nurtured and supported to achieve their full potential in a safe and stimulating and enabling environment.

2. Organisation

Harbinger Early Years Foundation Stage has a part time nursery class called 'Moonstone class'. Children are offered a two-and-a-half-day placement, either Monday all day, Tuesday all day and Wednesday morning, or Wednesday afternoon, Thursday all day and Friday all day. If working families have a DFE code, then full-time places are available (subject to availability). Our nursery class is supported by an experienced class teacher and a nursery nurse. Children can access learning both indoors and in our stimulating and spacious early years garden.

There is currently one reception class: 'Sunstone'. We pride ourselves on our reception unit, where children can play and learn across two classrooms, as well our exciting and spacious early years garden. Nursery and Reception children share the outdoor space which provides opportunities for holistic learning as well as physical challenge.

Both nursery and reception children experience a combination of daily structured sessions; Literacy learning, Phonics and Maths, as well as long periods of learning and explore time, both inside and outdoors. This allows children to embed learning through their own lines of enquiry.

See supporting documents 1. – Timetables.

3. Parents

Parents play an essential role in the life of Harbinger Early years Foundation Stage. We work closely with our families from the onset as we aim to provide the security, support and consistency to our young children as well as their parents.

Before children start nursery, we have home visits or school admission meetings, where we can find out about their child. This is followed by drop-in sessions, where parents can stay and play with their child. This gives them opportunities to experience school, as well as a chance for parents to meet other parents. When children officially start nursery, we will work with parents to settle the children. 'Wellbeing' is one of our values and we absolutely believe that children must be supported when they first start school.

Parents continue to play a crucial role once their child starts school. We will have the opportunity to see them daily during drop off and collections. We run parent workshops to support children's learning at home. We also aim to carry out parent reading sessions and end of term celebrations / stay and play / shows.

Our aim is for children to see good relationships between home and school. This will then instil a sense of security and allow them to begin to enjoy their school journey and love of learning.

4. Nursery Planning

Planning in Nursery should be focused on three elements –

- ❖ **Annual** planning to ensure coverage (see supporting documents 2 – Curriculum maps)
- ❖ **Chronology** - which focuses on the half termly learning opportunities centred around a theme. We also send home a half termly forecast for parents. (see supporting documents 3).
- ❖ **Focused group work** to support Phase 1 Phonics and Maths learning (see supporting documents 3)

Responsive planning in the moment is how we plan for free flow learning opportunities in our provision. It focuses on four/five pupils; observations are made, and next steps generated. This is then linked to other learners in the class. The free flow learning opportunities also focuses on what is successful and what the interests and needs of most of the pupils are. The environment is then planned based on these observations.

Focused group work are daily Maths and Phase 1 phonics sessions. Maths sessions include the directed learning, plus opportunities to develop this in the provision and during carpet sessions. Phonics planning includes the area of phase 1 phonics, as well as other activities.

5. Reception Planning

Planning in Reception should be focused on three elements –

- ❖ **Annual** planning to ensure coverage (supporting documents 2 – Curriculum maps)
- ❖ **Chronology** - which focuses on the half termly learning opportunities centred around a theme. We also send home a half termly forecast for parents. (see supporting documents 4).
- ❖ **Structured learning** opportunities, such as Maths time and Literacy learning time to allow consistency in outcomes for Reception age pupils (supporting documents 4).

Responsive planning in the moment is how we plan for free flow learning opportunities in our provision. It focuses on four / five pupils, observations are made, and next steps generated. This is then linked to other learners in the class. The environment is then planned based on these observations.

Structured learning sessions are adult lead during carpet times. The planning for Literacy, Maths, Jigsaw, Music and PE sessions should include overall outcomes, the learning journey for the half term, link to the overall theme and links to the EYFS curriculum. Maths topics should be taught consistently across both Reception classes. The Maths framework should be covered across the year based on the NCTEM and EYFSP.

Phonics is taught using the Letters and Sounds THEP planning.

6. Teaching and Learning

High-quality early years education, with a strong focus on communication, is good for every child. It is especially positive for disadvantaged children. The early years are the crucial years for making a difference. The EYFS is about how children learn, as well as what they learn. Children need opportunities to develop their own play and independent exploration. This is enjoyable and motivating. They also need adults to ‘scaffold’ their learning by giving them just enough help to achieve something they could not do independently. Helping children to think, discuss and plan ahead is important, like gathering the materials they need to make a den before they start building. These are ways of helping children to develop the characteristics of effective learning.

Development Matters, non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (July 2021)

We believe that children go through stages of learning before it is truly embedded:

- ❖ Shallow learning
- ❖ Deep learning
- ❖ Profound learning

Learning happens when children have to think hard, have opportunities for reasoning and explain their thinking (moving from deep learning to profound learning). Once children learn a skill or knowledge, they need to revisit and revise constantly to ‘connect’ and refer to it.

Children are exposed to a mastery curriculum. They experience it, play with it, use it, develop it, and connect with it.

We have developed a lesson structure applicable for nursery and reception which supports the whole school approach to teaching and learning.

Children benefit from starting points to learning which inspire and motivate. If a memorable task was linked to the learning, children will more likely be able to remember it, consolidate it and master it. EYFS staff at Harbinger skilfully plan inspirational hooks for learning to excite and motivate pupils based on current theme, or interests of learners.

7. Early Years Curriculum

The Early Years Curriculum for both Nursery and Reception is organised into themes. The focus for teaching and learning of structured sessions, as well as free flow learning is through the curriculum maps and themes. Each half term is broken down into a chronology highlighting components and end points for each area of learning. However, 'planning in the moment' is important to ensure that the needs and interest of the children are addressed. See supporting documents 2. for Curriculum maps.

8. Enabling environment

Ofsted (2017) suggest "a highly stimulating environment and exceptional organisation of the curriculum provides rich, varied and imaginative experiences. Children are highly motivated and very eager to join in. They consistently demonstrate curiosity, imagination and concentration. They are highly responsive to adults and each other. They do not distract others or become distracted easily themselves".

At Harbinger, our nursery and reception provision are set up so that children can lead their own learning experiences. They are responsible for selecting their resources and pursuing their interests until they reach a satisfactory conclusion. There is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated learning experiences.

Provision across all areas of learning is planned precisely. Continuous provision is regularly reviewed, and enhancements are added to challenge and excite. It is based on rigorous and sharply focused assessments of children's achievements so that every child undertakes highly challenging activities over time.

Please see supporting documents 5. for checklist of 'What makes an enabling environment'.

9. Role of the adult

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff must -

- Always interact / engage with children.
- Avoid physical contact with children as much as possible, except when children are unsettled, injured or unwell. Children are taught to ask for physical contact when necessary.
- Always Have a 'watchful' eye for health and safety.

Please see supporting documents 6. for the role of the adult in the EYFS.

10. Safety

To keep everyone safe it is important to know the following information: -

- If a child has an **accident** which is non-emergency, we administer first aid in the Sunstone classroom (for reception pupils) and Moonstone sink area (for nursery pupils). Please use wipes for open wounds and dressings if blood flow is significant. Please use gloves for your own safety. All first aid must be written in the accident books and communicated to key persons. There is an additional first aid kit in the garden as well as a first aid blanket for emergencies only.
- First Aiders – Susan Lysfjord, Laura Smith, Jackie Garner, Farhana Ferdousi, Negeena Raufi, Claire Norton-Steele and Zaiton Haron for emergency incidents.
- If a child makes a **disclosure** or a member of staff witnesses anything that makes them feel uncomfortable (child or adult) the procedure is to speak to Fiona Keogh (DSL), or Nimesha Nagahawatte or Jackie Garner (DDSL). If possible, make a note of it on the CP form kept in the Early Years office. The procedure is to use 'TED' – Tell me... Explain to me... Describe. For more information, please see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

- For **wet or soiled** pupils, every child has a change of clothes on their peg. If a child wets themselves, please change them in the star Reception toilet area (for reception pupils) and Moon toilets (for nursery pupils). The wet or soiled clothes must be put in a bag, labelled with the child's name and whether they have wet or soiled themselves. The bags must be left close by the exit points for the end of the day, or on pegs for reception pupils.
- For EYFS **risk assessments** for indoor and outdoor learning, please see supporting documents 7.

11. Behaviour

Behaviour management focuses on positive praise and reinforcement in the EYFS. Children need clear expectations of behaviour, which is consistently applied by all members of staff across EYFS. Children need the opportunity to be empowered and take responsibility for own actions. Role models should be provided, and the role of the adult is to support conflict resolution using the 6-step approach (see supporting documents 8).

When children are given clear expectations of behaviour; during structured sessions, carpet times, inside learning and exploring time, as well as outside learning and explore time. This allows children to behave in the appropriate way. If children make inappropriate choices of behaviour, then a consistent approach to dealing with unwanted behaviour will be applied.

There are four steps to follow when dealing with unwanted behaviour in the EYFS:

- 1) Adult disapproval
- 2) Verbal reminder
- 3) Final reminder (yellow sad face)
- 4) Time out (red sad face)

Overall, the emphasis must be on reinforcement of positive behaviour and praise.

12. Assessment

'Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.'

Statutory framework for the early year's foundation stage - setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (2017)

At Harbinger, assessment is the key to informing staff on how to move children forward.

Summative Assessment

At Harbinger, we begin with a baseline of where they are at using on entry data (National Reception Baseline Assessment), termly assessments of levels according to 'Development Matters' to track progress and end of year data for both nursery and reception.

Formative Assessment

Our formative assessment is the essential element that drives learning, ensures progress and raises attainment. In nursery and reception, there are targeted children per week, each child has a learning journey where observations are made, and teacher input highlighted and next steps / impact statements are noted if applicable. Please see supporting documents 9. – What Makes Good Assessment in EYFS.

The key to successful assessment in the EYFS is to ensure that the following aspects are considered –

- 1) The focus of the observations should include – context, significance, adults' role and the outcomes
- 2) Involve children in the learning journeys

13. Communication and Language

Communication and Language is the golden thread that runs throughout the EYFS at Harbinger school. Staff have high expectations of children's language through everyday encounters, providing structures to practice and rehearse language in different contexts. Children learn to retell a range of nursery rhymes and stories which enhance their language development. See supporting documents 10. – Language structures in the EYFS.

14. Phonics and Reading

Our intent at Harbinger is for all **nursery children** to show a passion for reading books and talking about stories. They will enjoy listening to longer stories and remember much of what happens. They will know many rhymes, be able to talk about familiar books, and be able to tell a long story.

For **reception children**, they will demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary; Anticipate – where appropriate – key events in stories; Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role-play.

For word reading, they will say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs; Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending; Read aloud simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Nursery reading

Nursery children will have opportunities for –

- Daily story time
- Reading opportunities during learn and explore time
- Beautiful book corners
- Fiction books to support learning in different areas
- Parent volunteers focusing on reading with children
- Parent workshops to ensure home support with reading
- Reading packs sent home
- Structured phonics sessions from Spring 1

Reception reading

Reception children will have opportunities for –

- Weekly shared reading sessions
- Daily Phonics sessions
- Daily early bird work relating to reading and writing
- Daily story time
- Guided reading twice per week
- Reading opportunities during learn and explore time
- Beautiful book corner
- Fiction books to support learning in different areas
- Parent workshops to ensure home support with reading

- Home learning, including Bug club and phonetically decodable books

Reception Literacy planning

- Literacy structured planning is centred around books relating to the theme.
- Guided reading should begin with mixed attainment groupings reading lilac books in autumn term. Then during the teaching of Phase 2 phonics, children should be introduced to pink books. In the spring term, when children are regrouped for Phonics, children should be in attainment groups and should be reading books matched to their phonic stage.

Phonics (see supporting documents 11).

Phonics plays an important role in the EYFS and needs to be taught systematically using the Tower Hamlets scheme (using letters and sounds) from Nursery through to Key Stage one.

15. Maths

Children will have the opportunity to learn early Mathematical knowledge and skills from nursery onwards in a practical, concrete and fun way.

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage - setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (March 2021)

Both nursery and reception children have a daily structured Maths session. The expectation is that the children can rehearse, reinforce and apply this learning during their learning and explore time (free flow).

Reception Maths planning

- Maths structured planning is carried out using the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM) Mastery Mathematics. It focuses on using a series of power points, interactive resources as well as CBeebies Number blocks.

Conclusion

When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.

Development Matters, non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (July 2021)