

## Early Years at Hall Grove

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. It is not just preparation for the next stage it is vitally important in itself.

Both the Pre-School and Reception classes follow the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum (EYFS).

Children joining our school have already learned a great deal. Family/carers are their main educators and many have attended other Pre-Schools in our community. The Early Years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

It builds on what our children already know and can do;

It ensures that all children are included and have access to the whole curriculum;

It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;

It provides a rich and stimulating environment.

### Our overall aims

- Y To settle the children into school life, making the transition from home / Pre-School as smooth as possible and to encourage them to develop a positive attitude to school and the learning environment
- Y To encourage the development of independence with regard to personal self management and in learning situations
- Y To establish good communications between parents and carers, children, Pre-School establishments and school staff
- Y To provide a well planned, organised and stimulating environment both in and outdoors, in which the children should be able to explore, question, test, observe, experiment, plan, make decisions for themselves, solve problems and participate in activities which are planned by adults as well as those which they plan and start themselves.
- Y To ensure that all children feel included, secure, confident and valued.
- Y To value and develop the whole child: taking into account his/her strengths, weaknesses, interests and individuality.
- Y To help children develop self-control and to respect the feelings, needs, culture and the abilities of others.
- Y To monitor progress throughout the Early Years Foundation stage, while taking action to identify areas of concern and provide necessary support.

### The Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS curriculum sets a series of learning goals for children to work towards from birth until they reach the end of EYFS at the age of 5+.

For most children, the end of the Reception Year will be the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, when the expectation is that most children will achieve the Early Learning Goals.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

A Unique Child

Positive Relationships  
Enabling Environments  
Learning and Development

### **A Unique Child**

At Hall Grove we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others. We use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing circle times and reward stickers to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

### ***Equal Opportunities (Inclusion)***

Within any EYFS cohort there will be wide variations in terms of development and maturity as well as family, religion, cultural background and Special Educational Needs. Children will have differing experiences, interests, skills and knowledge, which affect both their learning pace and styles. This diversity must be catered for within planning which has a flexible approach, using a wide range of strategies and teaching styles to address the particular needs of the children, families and the community. No child should be disadvantaged but each encouraged to develop self-esteem and confidence in their ability to learn.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence,

Using a wide range of teaching strategies,

Taking account of their range of life experiences and abilities when planning for their learning,

Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued,

Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination or stereotyping,

Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills,

Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary. Some children with Special Educational Needs may be identified before entry to school through liaison with other agencies. Information is also exchanged through links with Pre-School and parents.

### **Positive Relationships**

At Hall Grove we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent and form secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

### ***Home-school liaison***

It is recognised that all parents/carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. A successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

All parents are invited along to a morning in the term before their child starts at the school to receive information about the school and what to expect in September.

A parent briefing takes place when their child starts school. All parents are given a welcome pack which outlines procedures and routines as well as activities to support their child's learning at home.

Parents are also encouraged to be involved in making regular communication in either the child's communication book or their reading record. WOW comment cards are available for parents to have at home and complete with any significant achievements that may contribute to their child's learning journey.

A chart, stating the learning areas for each half term, is displayed in the classrooms; copies are always available for parents on the website.

Notices are written on the notice board and regular newsletters are sent home.

Parents are encouraged to talk to the class teacher as soon as possible if they have any queries or concerns and throughout the child's first year at school we promote an "open door" policy.

Activities are arranged throughout the year to encourage collaboration between child, parents and school.

Two parent/teacher interviews are held to discuss progress and individual targets for each child.

Termly written feedback is given to each parent about their child's achievements at school and a full academic report is written at the end of the year.

Parental involvement in the classroom is encouraged, working under the guidance of the class teacher.

### ***Staffing***

Each EYFS Class is staffed by a Qualified Teacher.

The class teacher will use the support of Teaching Assistants (TAs) to support the children in their learning.

French, Dance, Music and Physical Education are taught by specialist teachers. An EYFS member of staff always accompanies the children to these lessons.

### ***Induction***

Arrangements are made for children to visit the school for celebrations and other events. The Early Years team also visit the Pre-Schools of children joining Reception, particularly during the Summer Term before they start school. Those starting Hall Grove at Pre-School have home visits in the week leading up to the start of school. Photographs are collated of each child and displayed in class before being made into a book which they can then share with their friends and family as they start school.

During the Summer Term the new cohort spend sessions in their future classroom, with their new teacher. All children entering school in the September are invited to these sessions.

A paper balloon/ cake is sent to each child to be decorated at home, their work then forms part of a display as they arrive at school to celebrate each child's birthday during the year.

The entry into school on the first day is staggered so that children can become settled in small groups before starting the full day. Parents of children in Reception are given the option for their children to start with half days for the first week or two. Pre- School children attend a minimum of 5 mornings and then afternoons are booked on a termly basis.

### ***Transition into Year 1***

Teachers in Reception have close links to those in Year 1.

Reception children meet Year 1 teachers during assemblies and other Pre-Prep or whole school activities during their Reception year.

Year 1 teachers visit the Reception classes during the year, but in particular during the Summer term. Reception children have story sessions and shared reading sessions with the Year 1 teachers and children in their third term.

There is an induction morning for the children going into Year 1 in the Summer term. Assessments made during the year are passed on to Year 1 teachers in a meeting to discuss each child in the class. A summary of the EYFS profile scores are also shared.

By the end of the Reception Year the children will have had a daily Numeracy and Literacy lesson to prepare them for expectations in Year 1.

At the start of Year 1 the curriculum is tailored to meet the needs of the children moving up, with practical and outdoor activities being planned for.

### **Enabling Environments**

At Hall Grove we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. This begins by observing the children and assessing their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

### **Planning**

The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS. They are in line with the objectives stated in the Primary Frameworks for Literacy and Numeracy.

Planning will take place collaboratively between the teachers, children and other staff involved.

Long term plans provide an overview of how the different EYFS principles are addressed in the academic year. These plans also include continuous provision cards which demonstrate the learning intentions behind these resources and other enhancements that are included during the year.

Medium term plans, written termly, ensure all areas of learning are given equal emphasis and that all aspects of learning within the EYFS areas are covered.

Short term plans, written weekly, include sequences of new learning experiences and activities which consolidate skills just learned. Weekly planning takes into account the needs of the individual or groups of children using ongoing observations and informal assessment. They identify the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards the National Curriculum.

These plans must be flexible, to take account of the interests and needs of the children and to capitalise on unplanned events, particularly those initiated by the children.

### **Assessment, Record Keeping, Reporting**

Regular assessment of children's learning is made and used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation and discussion carried out by the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Weekly evaluation of the provision provides information on which to base the plans.

Assessments are made in relation to the Early Learning Goals that form part of the curriculum guidance for Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profiles are maintained for every child. They are updated regularly to track individual achievements and set future targets. They are completed by the end of June and the LEA is given a summary of each child's

achievement profile score. This information is also used to report on the progress in each of the six areas of learning to parents in the end of year academic report.

Annotated pieces of work are kept in each child's 'evidence' files and work books.

Selections of work from each area of learning are kept alongside observations made on the 'Tapestry' online learning journal to record, track and celebrate children's progress. These are maintained on a daily basis and used to inform judgements made against the EYFS profile.

Reception teachers carry out Baseline assessments and a Physical Development programme tailored to Hall Grove.

After initial assessments have been made in the Autumn Term, parent/teacher consultations are held. The child's strengths, interests and needs are discussed.

There follows a formal meeting for parents in the Spring term at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child's progress and set future targets.

Targets are set in the third term and communicated to the next teacher in a staff discussion meeting.

An individual end of year report outlining the child's strengths in all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as areas for development, is sent home in the third term.

All records that are kept for each child are available to parents at any time.

### ***The learning environment***

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and be at rest. At Hall Grove the environment is set up in learning areas across The Barn and an outdoor area, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. A variety of equipment is available for both indoors and outdoors, providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children. The materials and equipment used reflect both the community and the wider world and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.

Children's independence is encouraged through a well-organised environment where resources are easily accessible and stored suitably. The children are expected to take responsibility for their own belongings and the environment wherever possible.

All staff are aware of issues concerning health and safety and the physical state of resources is constantly monitored before, during and after use.

### **Learning and Development**

At Hall Grove we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter-connected.

### ***Approach to Learning***

The general features of good practice in our school that relate to the EYFS are:-

Partnership between teachers and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.

The understanding that teachers and assistants have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching.

A range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.

A carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

A mixture of directed and free choice activities to ensure a balanced programme. Attention is given to the linguistic and language experiences. Children are provided with every possible opportunity to speak and listen.

Provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities.

Encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management.

Providing the children time to become engrossed in what they are doing, to work in depth and to complete activities in order to develop positive attitudes to learning while staff need to understand how young children learn and develop, in order to observe and respond to them. Appropriate intervention can help children to become more involved in the learning process and provide opportunities for new learning and development, so that they can make progress.

Support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.

Identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents.

Good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school.

Clear aims for our work, and regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do. Regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

### ***Characteristics of Effective Learning***

The way each child learns is an important part of the approach taken at Hall Grove. Both staff and children reflect on this on a daily basis with the help of 3 characters in the classrooms- Creative Katie, Go for it Gus and Active Andy.

#### ***Y Play in the Foundation Stage***

Children at this stage do not differentiate between work and play and well-planned play is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge. It is also important that children have the opportunity to initiate their own play on a regular basis. They need time to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. They are able to take risks and make mistakes.

#### ***Y Active Learning***

“Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.”

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

### Y *Creativity and Critical Thinking*

“When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions.”

Children should be given opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning, not just through the arts. Adults can support children’s thinking and help them to make connections by showing genuine interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children can access resources freely and are allowed to move them around the setting to extend their learning.

### *Areas of Learning*

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing the seven areas of learning:-

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. In each area there are Early Learning Goals that define the expectations for most children to have reached by the end of the EYFS.

The Prime areas

#### Y *Communication and Language*

This area gives children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, speaking and listening in a variety of situations and developing their confidence and skills in expressing themselves.

#### Y *Physical development*

This is developed through the provision of opportunities for the children to be active and interactive and to develop their skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement. Alongside this, activities are carried out to promote an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food encouraging a positive feeling of well-being.

#### Y *Personal, Social and Emotional Development*

Children are helped to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to learn how to manage their feelings and to have confidence in their own abilities. This is crucial for all aspects of life and will give the children the best opportunity for success in all other areas of learning.

The above prime areas are then strengthened and applied through four *specific* areas

#### Y *Literacy*

Children are encouraged to link sounds and letters to begin to read and write. A wide range of reading and writing materials help capture their interest.

#### Y *Maths*

A broad range of activities are provided in which the children can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding of Maths. They practise and extend their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers,

simple calculating, describing shapes, spaces and measures. They will use key mathematical skills and logical thinking. The children will explore practically with opportunity for discussion and simple forms of recording.

#### *Y Understanding of the World*

Helping them to make sense of their physical world is achieved through exploring and observing to find out about people, places, technology and the environment. They will undertake practical 'experiments' and work with a range of materials and tools safely. Foundations are developed for Science, History, Geography, RS and ICT.

#### *Y Expressive arts and design*

Exploration and play with a wide range of media and materials is fundamental to successful learning and enables children to make connections and extend their thoughts, feelings and understanding. They are encouraged to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, imaginative and role-play activities and design and technology; it also draws on the aesthetic and creative aspects of all subjects.

Each area of learning is taught through the use of indoor and outdoor classrooms.

#### **Health and Safety**

Hall Grove Health and Safety Policy is adhered to.

#### **Safeguarding children**

Hall Grove Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy is followed.

#### **Admissions**

Hall Grove Admissions Policy is followed.

#### **Complaints**

Hall Grove Complaints Procedure is followed.

#### **Behaviour**

Hall Grove Discipline, Behaviour, Rewards & Sanctions Policy is followed.

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