

Juniper Hill School

EYFS Policy (Early Years Foundation Stage)



Kindness Enjoyment Achievement

This policy was reviewed in March 2026

Review Date March 2028

Intent




At Juniper Hill it is our intent that all children who enter our EYFS have the opportunity to develop socially, emotionally, physically, verbally and cognitively, regardless of background, circumstances or needs in a safe and nurturing environment. We aim to work collaboratively with our **community** of parents and carers to provide every child with the skills to become happy, **independent, creative** and **curious** lifelong learners who have the **courage** to try new things and subsequently reach their full potential. It is our intent that all the children in EYFS will be encouraged to be **respectful** to their peers, the adults they encounter in school and in the school **community** as well as their environment.

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception Year. At Juniper Hill School it applies to children who are in our Reception classes.





Our school vision is to empower our school community to have the courage to make a difference in the world. In the EYFS we are beginning the process of supporting all the children to achieve this.



Our EYFS Policy is underpinned by our three school aims:

-  **Kindness** – we teach and encourage the children to be kind and courteous to others as well as themselves. We explore ways of showing kindness to our peers, the adults in school, our families and people in their community. We want the children to leave the Reception year understanding ways they can be kind and respectful to everyone they encounter.
-  **Enjoyment** – we want the children to enjoy their learning and thus develop a lifelong love of learning.
-  **Achievement** – In the EYFS children are encourage to achieve in all areas of the EYFS curriculum. This includes socially, emotionally, creatively, linguistically, physically as well as academically. Children are given opportunities to achieve through practical experiences where play and learning are combined.

Aims

In the EYFS at Juniper Hill we seek to provide each pupil with the best possible start to their school journey. We aim to:





-  Provide a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued.
-  Provide a stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
-  Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
-  Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.

-  Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.
-  Develop and work in close partnership with parents and guardians, valuing their contributions to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles

These are:

-  **A Unique child** – At Juniper Hill, we recognise that every child is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and 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 and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning.
-  **Positive Relationships** - At Juniper Hill, we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful, supportive, and professional relationships with the children and their families.
-  **Enabling Environments**, - Children learn well in environments in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. At Juniper Hill, we value all learning opportunities and experiences and recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Our environment is safe and secure and is set up for children to find and locate equipment and resources independently.
-  **Learning and development** - Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates. At Juniper Hill, we aim to provide an environment that celebrates the different ways in which children learn including children with special educational needs and disabilities. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Implementation

Curriculum

Juniper Hill follows the curriculum outlined in the EYFS framework (2021). 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

These areas are essential for fostering early learning skills and are promoted heavily through our planning and provision. Successful mastery of these skills supports children to achieve well in the specific areas of learning and their continued learning through the school.

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

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

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These are:



Playing and exploring - Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world around them. They practise and build on their own ideas and those presented to them. They 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 and how to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.


Active learning- Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need 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.

Creating and thinking critically - We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between them and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning. This learning allows children develop their abilities to play and explore, take an active role and think creatively.

Planning

At Juniper Hill planning is divided into long term, medium term, and short term.

-  Long term plans state the topics to be covered each year with ideas to plan throughout each strand of the curriculum. (This can be seen in the curriculum overview on the website under EYFS year group.)
-  Medium term plans illustrate objectives being taught each term.

 Short term or weekly plans show specific activities and planned for objectives for the cohort of children. These will include a variety of adult-led activities and provision to inspire and support child-led learning. Staff ensure that all children are encouraged to experience all areas of activity throughout the week. This is carefully monitored and altered as the year progresses and we begin to support children's transition into Year One.

Planning Process

Good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practice and is informed through observations we make of the children within our environment. All staff who are in the EYFS team are involved in the process of planning to consider current interests, development, and learning needs within the cohort. Plans are sometimes adjusted or altered during the week in response to the needs and interests of the children.

Planning for our environments

At Juniper Hill we have a large outside environment as well as two separate classrooms. Our classrooms are organised to allow children to explore and learn safely and securely. Each classroom has defined learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. Both classrooms have direct access to the outdoor area which is used by both classes. The outside area has equal importance within the early years setting and children can free flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when inside. As well as offering opportunities for physical activity, freedom and movement and promoting a sense of well-being, they can explore, use their senses and develop their language skills. We plan activities and resources for both the indoor and outdoor environments, through separate Continuous Provision plans. These give the objectives and resources for each activity as well as providing a focus for the adult who may be interacting with the children in a particular activity to bring their learning on. These enable the children to develop all areas of their learning within both environments.

Teaching and Learning

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of child-initiated and adult-led activities. In both types of activities, the Early Years practitioners in our school respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through caring and positive interaction.

Fundamental British Values

In Reception, we teach children to recognise differences; whether these are differences in the way we look, what we believe and in the ways we think. In the first term of school, the children share their stories and experiences from home that reflect their values and

interests; something which we celebrate. We emphasise that regardless of differences, we are all equal and deserve respect.

The children are supported with understanding and distinguishing between right and wrong choices to ensure that we are able to maintain a setting which is fair and safe for everyone. The children are asked to contribute towards creating a 'class agreement' (rule of law) – a set of rules we all agree to follow. These are revisited throughout the year and adjusted if we feel is necessary. We also work closely with children to support their understanding of sharing and turn-taking.

The children are encouraged to make their own decisions and develop confidence to voice their own ideas. There are various things we do in Reception to encourage independent choice making; this includes book votes, voting for a preferred activity, playing games which explore individual opinions etc. Furthermore, we want children to have the courage to take risks, which will help to develop a stronger sense of self as well as improve self-esteem

Impact



Assessment

In the EYFS at Juniper Hill ongoing and regular assessments are an integral part of the learning and development process. The staff are constantly assessing the children in their everyday activities, play and through more focused work. We use observations of the children, photos, the work that they do, feedback from parents and comments made by the children, to decide where we believe the children are working in the 17 areas of learning. These support us in understanding their learning needs, interests and learning styles and the information is then used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Observations - Observations of children's play and learning are recorded within the school day on Evidence Me. Observations are only recorded for significant learning achievements for each particular child. Observations are currently written and photographs taken if they are relevant to show either engagement, stages taken in the learning or a finished piece of work. The observations are kept within the child's online journal and available for parents to view.

Baseline – From September 2021 all the children in EYFS will take part in the statutory reception baseline assessment. As well as this statutory assessment the school will also carry out its own observations to assess communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional skills. Information from these baseline assessments is used to inform our teaching and learning for the year and the modifications we need to make for individual children and groups of children. We share the information with parents at the parental consultation meetings.

EYFSP – The 'Early Years Foundation Stage Profile' is completed for each child in June. Each child is assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

-  Expected (meeting the expected level of development)
-  Emerging (not yet reaching expected levels)

This profile also assesses whether a child has reached a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). To achieve a good level of development a child needs to be expected in all the





Prime areas and in the Literacy and Mathematical areas. Information from the EYFSP provides a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities, their progress against expected levels, and their readiness for Year 1. Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the EYFSP report together with a discussion on each child's skills and abilities in relation to the three key characteristics of effective learning. The child's next teacher can then use this information when planning for the child's learning needs. This information is also shared with parents through the annual report in July.

Transition





Transition into Reception

We believe that a successful transition into a child's first year in school is paramount to achieving our intent for the children to be "happy, independent, creative and curious lifelong learners who thrive and reach their full potential."

The transition process at Juniper Hill is as follows:

-  New reception parents are invited to attend a meeting in the summer term to welcome them to the school and to provide them with essential information for their child's transition into school.
-  The phase leader for EYFS visit's the majority of children at their nursery or pre-school setting to meet them and their key workers to discuss each child. As we take children from between 18 to 24 different settings this is not always possible for all children. If a meeting cannot take place in person a phone call will be made as an alternative communication.
-  Each child will be invited to attend a stay and play session so they can spend time at Juniper Hill with their teachers in their classroom.
-  All parents will be offered the opportunity to meet their child's class teacher in an individual meeting to provide any information they feel the school needs to know about their child as well as an opportunity to ask any questions.

Once the children join school in September the following procedures will apply for them to gradually adjust to their new surroundings and establish positive relationships:

-  The children have a staggered entry and attend only the mornings initially. The summer born children are admitted first before the Spring born children join them, then finally the Autumn born. This takes place over one week.
-  The following week all the children stay for lunch and go home at 1pm.
-  After this, the aim is for all children to start full time, unless agreed otherwise with the parent and class teacher.
-  This process is not set in stone. Some children may take longer to adjust to full time and some may adapt to it quicker. We work with parents and consider how a child is adjusting to their new school environment.

Transition into Year One

During the summer term we begin to prepare children for transition into year one and the key stage one curriculum. We have put provision and opportunities in place to support this transition period. These include:

- 🏠 Story sessions held by their new class teacher and a question and answer opportunity to get to know them better.
- 🏠 A transition day when the children visit their new teacher and classroom and have a full day in their new environment. This gives them an opportunity to experience the new routines to adjust to their new surroundings.
- 🏠 A thorough hand-over between teachers ahead of the summer holiday.

Working with Parents

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

We facilitate this by:

- 🏠 Talking to parents about their child before their child start school
- 🏠 Providing a literacy and numeracy meeting to parents in the Autumn and Spring term to give parents up to date strategies on how to support their child at home
- 🏠 Encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents the Autumn and Spring terms at which the parent can discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher.
- 🏠 Providing parents with a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- 🏠 Arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- 🏠 Encouraging parents to send in any information or evidence of their child's progress that they have experienced at home through Evidence Me

Equal Opportunities & Inclusion of SEN in Early Years

At Juniper, we strive to create classrooms which are inclusive and have a strong sense of community. We believe it is crucial for children to learn about equality and celebrate diversity early on. Therefore, in Reception, we take great care in teaching children about differences and how we can be mindful, supportive and respectful towards one another. We do this through our life skills lessons as well as reading stories, sharing 'All About Me' books, using puppets and having guest speakers.





In Reception, the staff follow procedures in line with our school policy. We work closely with individual learners to quickly identify barriers to learning and work as a team to come up with solutions to the problems. Where necessary, they liaise with other professionals to ensure we are using appropriate resources and up-to-date strategies. Things we commonly do in Reception to support individual learners include the use of visuals throughout the day, friendship building activities, group work involving turn-taking, interactive 1:1 activities focussing on a particular subject, and the use of positive reinforcement.

For children with additional needs, we tailor the classroom where necessary to meet these needs and ensure the learning is accessible. We work collaboratively with both the SENDCO and parents to give pupils the best start to their learning journey, in an environment that understands and delivers what they need in order to reach their full potential.

Safeguarding and Welfare Procedures.

Our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

-  Assessment
Feedback
-  SEND
-  Life Skills and Mental Health and Wellbeing
Child Protection Policy
-  Behaviour / Relationship Policy