



New Horizons
Children's Academy

PART OF THE THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST



Children first - Challenge - Aspire - Achieve

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Inception date: September 2026

Review date: September 2028

Introduction

This policy outlines the purpose, nature, provision and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at New Horizons Children's Academy. The EYFS has its own statutory framework, which applies to all children from birth until the end of the Reception year.

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support they need to fulfil their potential. A child's experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up."

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Department for Education (EYFS Statutory Framework September 2025)

At New Horizons Children's Academy, children are admitted to our Nursery class the term following their third birthday. Children are admitted to the Reception year in the September following their fourth birthday.

Early childhood is the foundation upon which children build the rest of their lives. At New Horizons Children's Academy, we greatly value the significance of the EYFS in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We also believe that early childhood is valuable in its own right, reflecting our school values of '**Child First, Aspire, Challenge, Achieve**'. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life, not simply as preparation for the next stage of education.

Aims & Objectives

Our aim is for children to settle into school calmly, with enthusiasm and enjoyment that fosters a lifelong love of learning.

We aim to provide an environment where learning is nurtured and encouraged, and where everyone is treated equally, respectfully and with kindness. We believe that all children thrive in an EYFS setting that is well organised and managed by skilled adults, while being responsive to children's interests, ideas and stages of development. We are committed to supporting all children to become independent, confident and collaborative learners in a happy, caring and stimulating environment that enables them to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually.

At New Horizons Children's Academy, we will:

- Offer a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum that enables all children to achieve their full potential.
- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging environment that promotes learning and development.
- Deliver a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that prepares children for further learning in Key Stage 1, while promoting independence, confidence, choice and decision-making.
- Value each child as an individual by regularly assessing their needs, recognising their achievements and supporting their continued progress.
- Develop strong partnerships with parents and carers to ensure positive outcomes for all children through effective communication and collaboration.
- Provide a caring, inclusive and enabling learning environment that offers equal opportunities for every child and is responsive to the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our Early Years Foundation Stage provision is based on the following principles:

- Building on what children already know, can do and understand.
- Ensuring that no child is excluded or disadvantaged.
- Providing high-quality opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors.
- Creating a rich, stimulating and enabling learning environment.
- Recognising the importance of strong partnerships with parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Framework:

The statutory curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is set out in the 'Department for Education's Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'. This guidance helps practitioners to deepen their understanding of child development and informs planning, assessment and teaching to support children's learning and progress.

The EYFS is underpinned by four overarching principles, which shape our practice and support all children to learn and develop:

1. **A Unique Child** – Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.
2. **Positive Relationships** – Children learn to be strong and independent through positive and secure relationships with adults and their peers.
3. **Enabling Environments** – Children learn and develop well in enabling environments where their individual needs are met and where there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.
4. **Learning and Development** – Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework recognises that all areas of learning and development are important and interconnected.

1. A Unique Child

Every child is a unique individual who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. At New Horizons Children's Academy, we value the diversity of our children and families and believe that every child matters. We are committed to ensuring that all children are treated fairly and with respect, regardless of ethnicity, culture, language, religion, gender, disability or family background. We celebrate diversity and strive to create an inclusive environment where every child feels safe, valued and able to thrive.

Inclusion

At New Horizons Children's Academy, we are committed to providing an inclusive environment where every child can achieve their personal best. We recognise that children develop and learn at different rates and ensure that our provision is responsive to their individual needs.

We will:

- Provide opportunities for every child to achieve their full potential through regular observation, assessment and responsive planning.
- Set realistic, ambitious and appropriately challenging learning opportunities that support and extend each child's development.
- Use a wide range of teaching strategies and approaches that meet the diverse learning needs of all children.
- Provide a safe, supportive and enabling learning environment that is accessible to all.

- Use resources that celebrate diversity and promote equality, free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitor children's progress regularly and provide timely support and intervention where appropriate.
- Work closely with parents, carers and relevant external professionals and agencies to ensure children's individual needs are met, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), so that every child has full access to the curriculum and makes good progress from their starting points.

2. Positive Relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive, secure and respectful relationships. At New Horizons Children's Academy, we are committed to developing caring, supportive and professional relationships with all children and their families, recognising that these partnerships are fundamental to children's learning, development and wellbeing.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents and carers are children's first and most enduring educators. We value working in close partnership with families to support every child's learning and development through:

- Meeting parents and carers before their child starts school through induction meetings before admissions, Stay and Play sessions during the summer term and where appropriate, visits to children's homes or individual meetings.
- Visiting children in their current early years provision, where possible, to support a smooth and positive transition into school.
- Working closely with local private, voluntary and independent (PVI) early years providers to share information and develop an understanding of each cohort's strengths and needs.
- Sharing the school's expectations through the Home–School Agreement and induction information.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to discuss how each child has settled into school.
- Operating an open-door policy so that parents and carers can speak with staff about any questions or concerns.
- Communicating regularly through newsletters, curriculum updates and the school website.
- Inviting parents and carers to workshops, such as phonics and early reading sessions, to support learning at home.
- Offering parent consultation meetings throughout the year to discuss children's progress and next steps.
- Providing a written annual report outlining each child's attainment and progress.
- Inviting families to school events and celebrations throughout the year, including assemblies, curriculum workshops, performances and Sports Day.

Staff

All staff working within the Early Years Foundation Stage build warm, positive and respectful relationships with every child, ensuring that their individual needs are understood and met. Throughout the day, practitioners interact purposefully with children by modelling language, extending learning through high-quality interactions, engaging in play, listening carefully to children's ideas and interests, and supporting their wellbeing and development.

3. Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop best in enabling environments where skilled adults respond to their individual interests and needs, supporting them to build on their learning over time. Children also benefit from strong partnerships between practitioners and parents and carers. At New Horizons Children's Academy, we recognise that the learning environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending children's development. We strive to provide a welcoming, stimulating and inclusive environment where children feel safe, confident, valued and appropriately challenged.

At New Horizons Children's Academy, we provide rich learning opportunities through carefully planned, stimulating environments and high-quality resources that encourage children to explore, investigate, take appropriate risks and develop independence safely. We do this by:

- Providing daily access to both indoor and outdoor learning environments, with well-planned continuous provision alongside adult-led, adult-guided and child-initiated learning experiences.
- Offering a balance of play-based learning and purposeful teaching, enabling children to direct aspects of their own learning while benefiting from carefully planned opportunities provided by practitioners.
- Planning engaging learning environments, both indoors and outdoors, that promote curiosity, creativity, exploration and a positive attitude towards learning, while reflecting children's interests, experiences and stages of development.
- Providing high-quality resources and materials that reflect the diversity of our school community and the wider world.
- Creating opportunities that challenge children's thinking, develop problem-solving skills and encourage independence and resilience.
- Ensuring that all learning spaces and resources are safe, well maintained and checked regularly in line with health and safety requirements.
- Encouraging children to access outdoor learning weekly throughout the year and in a range of weather conditions. Parents and carers are asked to provide suitable clothing, including a waterproof coat, wellington boots and a sun hat, as well as a PE kit and plimsolls where appropriate.

4. Learning and Developing

All areas of learning and development are important and interconnected. We recognise that children develop and learn at different rates and in different ways. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework supports the education and care of all children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Our EYFS curriculum reflects the seven areas of learning and development identified within the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**.

The seven areas of learning and development are:

Prime Areas

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

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World

- Expressive Arts and Design

The Prime Areas are fundamental to children's development and provide the foundations for learning in all other areas. The Specific Areas build on these foundations, developing the essential knowledge and skills children need to engage successfully with the world around them.

These seven areas are closely linked with the **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning**, which describe how children learn through:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

None of the areas of learning can be delivered in isolation. They are equally important and interconnected. Learning is planned through a balance of child-initiated, adult-guided and adult-led experiences, ensuring that all children make good progress from their individual starting points. Through play, exploration and meaningful first-hand experiences, children develop their understanding of the world around them. They learn through talk, stories, practical experiences, high-quality interactions and carefully planned learning opportunities. We set high expectations that are realistic, ambitious and responsive to the needs of every child.

Children's development is assessed continuously through observation and professional knowledge. As children become increasingly confident and secure within the Prime Areas, teaching and learning place an increasingly balanced emphasis across all seven areas of learning and development.

Where a child's progress in any of the Prime Areas gives cause for concern, practitioners will discuss this with the school's SENDCo (or Inclusion Manager, where applicable) and the child's parents or carers to agree appropriate support and any necessary interventions.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The **Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning** are integral to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and underpin all areas of learning and development. We recognise that children's learning is holistic and cannot be separated into isolated areas. As children interact with people, resources and their environment, they often demonstrate several characteristics of effective learning simultaneously.

At New Horizons Children's Academy, we ensure that our learning environment, teaching approaches and curriculum promote the three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning. These underpin all aspects of learning and development, encouraging children to approach new experiences with curiosity, confidence, resilience and enthusiasm while developing as motivated, independent learners.

The three Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning are:

- **Playing and Exploring** – Children investigate, explore and experiment with their environment. They learn through first-hand experiences, build on what they already know and demonstrate a willingness to 'have a go'.
- **Active Learning** – Children are encouraged to concentrate, persevere and remain motivated when faced with challenges. They experience the satisfaction of achieving the goals they set themselves and develop resilience through sustained engagement.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically** – Children are supported to develop their own ideas, make connections in their learning, solve problems, test their thinking and develop strategies for approaching new challenges in different ways.

Planning

Planning is based on a well-sequenced curriculum that supports children's learning and development across all seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage and prepares them for Year 1. Adult-led teaching is planned for key aspects of learning, including phonics (Little Wandle), mathematics (White Rose), reading (Little Wandle) and writing (Ready, Steady, Write), while ensuring that children have frequent opportunities to apply and extend their learning through play and meaningful experiences.

Our long-term and medium-term planning provide a clear progression of knowledge and skills. Planning is informed by ongoing assessment and is responsive to children's interests, needs and stages of development. While learning may be organised around themes or high-quality texts, these are adapted where appropriate to reflect children's emerging interests and to maximise engagement.

Planning identifies appropriate next steps for all children, including those working towards the Early Learning Goals and those who are ready to deepen and extend their learning beyond age-related expectations.

Teaching

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is carefully planned to ensure that all seven areas of learning and development are delivered through a balance of adult-led, adult-guided and child-initiated experiences. Play is central to children's learning and provides meaningful opportunities for exploration, investigation and problem-solving.

Practitioners use ongoing observation and assessment to respond to children's interests, strengths and individual needs. Through high-quality interactions, questioning, modelling and purposeful teaching, staff support children to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to make good progress across all areas of learning.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It enables practitioners to understand children's progress, identify their next steps in learning and plan experiences that meet their individual needs.

Starting Points

As children join the EYFS, practitioners gather information from parents and carers, previous early years settings and, where appropriate, transition visits. This information helps establish each child's starting points and supports a smooth transition into school.

In Reception, all eligible children complete the statutory **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)** within the first six weeks of starting school, in line with Department for Education requirements. The RBA provides a national starting point for measuring progress to the end of Key Stage 2 and does not form part of children's ongoing assessment within school.

Formative Assessment

Ongoing assessment is central to effective practice in the EYFS. Practitioners continually observe children as they learn through play, adult-led activities and everyday interactions. These observations, together with professional knowledge of child development and information shared by parents and carers, are used to inform planning and identify appropriate next steps in learning.

Assessment is proportionate and purposeful, supporting teaching rather than creating unnecessary paperwork.

Parents and carers are offered regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress during consultation meetings and are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey throughout the year.

Monitoring Progress

Practitioners regularly review children's progress to identify strengths, celebrate achievements and ensure that appropriate support or challenge is provided. Assessment information is analysed to identify patterns of attainment across the cohort and to inform curriculum planning, provision and intervention.

Progress is reviewed through termly assessment and pupil progress meetings, where staff identify children who may require additional support, targeted intervention or further challenge. Children's views and interests are also considered as part of the ongoing assessment process.

End of Reception Assessment

At the end of the Reception year, the class teacher completes the statutory **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)**. Children are assessed against the **Early Learning Goals (ELGs)** and are judged as either **expected** or **emerging** in each area of learning.

The EYFS Profile outcomes are shared with parents and carers, passed on to the Year 1 teacher to support transition and submitted to the Local Authority in accordance with statutory requirements. Parents and carers also receive a written end-of-year report summarising their child's attainment, progress and readiness for the next stage of learning.

Transition

At New Horizons Children's Academy, we recognise that effective transition is essential to children's wellbeing, confidence and future success. We view learning as a continuous journey and work closely with families and early years providers to ensure smooth transitions between home, Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1. Our transition arrangements are carefully planned to help every child feel safe, secure and ready for the next stage of their learning.

Transition into Nursery

Children are eligible to start in our Nursery the term following their third birthday, with the majority joining in September, January or April.

To support a successful transition, we:

- Invite parents and carers to visit the Nursery and meet the staff.
- Offer children opportunities to attend a Nursery session before they begin.
- Meet with parents and carers through consultations at school or, where appropriate, through home visits.
- Liaise with previous early years settings, where applicable, to support continuity of learning and care.
- Provide a gradual, flexible induction programme that is responsive to each child's individual needs and supports them to settle confidently into Nursery.

Where children require additional time to settle, practitioners work closely with parents and carers to agree appropriate arrangements, reviewing these regularly to ensure the child's needs remain central to the process.

Transition into Reception

Parents and carers of children joining Reception are invited to an induction meeting during the summer term. This meeting provides information about:

- the school's routines and expectations;
- uniform, PE kit and universal infant free school meals;
- attendance and absence procedures;
- the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum; and
- ways in which parents and carers can support learning at home.

Through Stay and Play sessions during the summer term, children are offered several opportunities to visit their new classroom, meet their teacher and become familiar with the Reception environment before they start school. Parents and carers are invited to attend one of these sessions where appropriate.

Reception staff also work closely with children's current early years providers and, where appropriate, visit children in their existing setting or at home to support a smooth transition and gain a better understanding of each child's individual needs and interests.

Transition into Key Stage 1

Throughout Reception, children gradually become familiar with wider school life through assemblies, lunchtimes, enrichment activities and interactions with staff and older children.

During the summer term, children have opportunities attend story time sessions with Year 1 teachers, enter through the Main Hall entrance to class, meet their Year 1 teacher and spend time in their new classroom and have the Year 1 teachers join them for continuous provision sessions. Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together to share assessment information, children's interests, learning needs and effective strategies to support continuity of learning.

In September parents and carers are invited to a transition meeting that explains the expectations of Year 1 now they have entered the National Curriculum and how they can support their child's continued learning at home.

Safeguarding & Welfare

At New Horizons Children's Academy, we recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe, secure and their individual needs are met. We are committed to providing a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment where every child can thrive.

We comply with the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**, alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

To meet these requirements, we will:

- Appoint a designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy designated safeguarding leads who have appropriate training and responsibilities.
- Ensure all staff receive safeguarding training, including regular updates, so that they understand their responsibilities and know how to respond to concerns.
- Ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so through safer recruitment procedures and the appropriate pre-employment checks.
- Provide a comprehensive induction programme so that all staff understand their roles, responsibilities and the school's policies and procedures.

- Ensure that at least one member of staff with a current full paediatric first aid (PFA) certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and accompanies children on outings where required.
- Maintain appropriately stocked and easily accessible first aid equipment.
- Maintain staffing arrangements that meet statutory requirements and support the safety, care and learning of all children.
- Provide a welcoming, safe, stimulating and inclusive environment where children can develop confidence and independence.
- Promote children's health and wellbeing through healthy lifestyles, physical activity and good hygiene practices.
- Administer medication safely in accordance with the school's supporting children with medical conditions and medicines policies.
- Promote healthy eating by providing healthy snacks where appropriate and encouraging healthy choices in partnership with parents and carers.
- Promote positive behaviour using developmentally appropriate strategies that support children's emotional wellbeing and self-regulation.
- Ensure that all furniture, equipment and learning resources are safe, suitable and well maintained.
- Follow fire safety procedures, undertake regular fire drills and ensure that all staff understand emergency evacuation procedures.
- Provide daily opportunities for outdoor learning and play, except where exceptional circumstances make this inappropriate.
- Carry out risk assessments where appropriate and take reasonable steps to minimise risks while enabling children to benefit from appropriate challenge and exploration.
- Work closely with parents, carers and relevant professionals to ensure that children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate support and reasonable adjustments to enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.
- Maintain the records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Any safeguarding or child protection concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education*.

Keeping Safe

At New Horizons Children's Academy, we promote a culture where children feel safe, secure and valued. We support children to understand boundaries, routines and expectations through positive relationships and consistent behaviour management in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Children are encouraged to develop independence, resilience and self-regulation by making appropriate choices and taking managed risks within a safe environment. Through planned learning opportunities and everyday experiences, children are taught how to recognise potential hazards, keep themselves safe and seek help from trusted adults when needed. We are committed to promoting both the physical and emotional wellbeing of every child.

Good Health

We promote healthy lifestyles and support children to develop healthy habits from an early age.

Children have access to fresh drinking water throughout the day. A healthy snack is provided daily, and milk is available in accordance with national entitlement arrangements. Parents and carers are encouraged to provide only water in children's named water bottles.

We also promote good hygiene, physical activity, healthy eating and oral health through our daily routines and curriculum.

Intimate Care

Intimate care is any care that involves washing, touching or carrying out procedures that most children are able to do independently. Depending on their age, stage of development or individual needs, some children may require support with toileting, changing clothes following an accident or other aspects of personal care.

All intimate care is provided respectfully, sensitively and in accordance with the school's Intimate Care Policy. Children's privacy and dignity are maintained at all times, and staff work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that individual needs are met appropriately.

Where a child requires ongoing support with intimate care, an individual Intimate Care Plan will be agreed with parents and carers and reviewed regularly.

When intimate care is required, staff follow appropriate hygiene procedures, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Parents and carers are informed of significant incidents in accordance with the school's procedures.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of all staff working within the Early Years Foundation Stage to implement this policy consistently and to ensure that practice reflects the principles of the EYFS Statutory Framework.

The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and relevant curriculum leaders will monitor the quality of EYFS provision as part of the school's monitoring and evaluation cycle. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains compliant with current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.