



Harriers Banbury Academy

an Aspirations Academy

POLICY TITLE: Early Years Policy

Persons with Responsibility:

Alex Pearson (Executive Principal)

Jon Sherington (EYU Lead)

Amy Willson (Business Manager)

Policy History:

Issue No.	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
4	June 2022	Reviewed JS, AW	COVID 19. New EFYS framework 2021. Phonics and Early Reading. Seesaw / Tapestry	September 2023
3	September 2020	Reviewed JA, AW		September 2021
2	September 2019	JA, JS and AW	Updated for new Tapestry and baseline	September 2020
1	September 2018	JA, JS and AW		September 2018



Early Years Policy

Our Values

Our belief in Early Years at Harriers Banbury Academy is that every child should be given the best start to life and we build a curriculum that is centred on meeting every child's needs.

Early Years at Harriers Banbury Academy comprises of children from ages 3 to 5. A large amount of time is spent in Early Years developing personal, social and emotional skills. By valuing these skills, the children can develop resilience and confidence in themselves in order to transition through the rest of the school. We also strongly value our belief in our behaviour policy, understanding that all behaviour is communication. Focussing upon allowing children to express themselves and to understand why they may feel or act a certain way forms a large role in our pedagogy within Early Years. We also continue these beliefs into Key Stage 1 as children from Early Years transition each September.

Our structure

The Early Years is split into 2 areas: Nursery and Reception classes. The Nursery and Reception classes are in two different buildings, but Nursery and Reception do share areas throughout the week to integrate learning. Nursery children can join the term after they turn 3 years old, and we offer three intakes throughout the year: September, January and April. The choices offered to Nursery applicants are: 30 hours of free child care (if eligible) which is taken from 8.30am to 3.00pm daily; morning sessions, which are from 8.30am to 11.30am; afternoon sessions, which are from 12pm to 3.00pm. Home visits are made to each child before they begin, and each child is invited to view the setting before they start their sessions.

When a new child starts with us, they are invited to a 'stay and play' or 'meet and greet' session before their start date where they are given a booklet of information and they will be offered a home visit.

Reception children join in the September after their fourth birthday. The day in Reception is from 8.45 am to 3.00pm. The first week in September is a transition week, where the children will do half days. The purpose of this is to introduce them to the environment gradually and calmly and they will meet the children in their class in their session before they meet the other class who share the room. All children are visited prior to their start date in September, and this is usually a visit to their nursery setting to speak to their current Key worker. All Early Years children are baselined within the first 6 weeks using the statutory government baseline. This process is monitored by the Principal.

The day in Reception will involve four discrete lessons: Phonics, maths, handwriting, and an area of the curriculum. These 4 lessons are situated at the start and end of the morning and afternoon. Between each lesson is "choosing time" where the children can independently access the environment and the adults in the room either do interventions or observe to gather evidence for each child's journal. Learning through play is highly valued in our setting. The interventions are heavily based around Communication and Language skills, PP children and SEND provision.

We aim for a proportion of the day to be devoted to child-initiated learning. Children learn best through exploration and experimentation and our curriculum reflects this. All children will be involved in adult directed carpet sessions throughout the day at various levels related to the age and stage of the individuals. For those

who are here for lunch, we offer the opportunity to bring a packed lunch or have a hot school meal. These are nutritionally balanced and follow our school food policy. We are part of the fruit and milk schemes that give children one piece of fruit and a carton of milk a day. Water is freely available. These snacks can be taken at any point in the day. Eating is a social event and helps children to develop their skills in this area of learning.

Children learn best through talk, play, repetition and first hand experiences. We ensure the environment and resources reflect this and encourage children to take ownership over the experiences they have. There are clear areas of learning set out within the rooms and outside spaces; these are labelled so children know where they can access the resources they need. These areas are stimulating and offer interest for all age phases providing challenges and opportunities to develop language. Communication skills underpin all learning so we offer great opportunities to develop these skills through the use of visual aids, signing and speech. The role of the interactor is to facilitate child initiated learning through having a clear understanding of the curriculum from age Birth to 3 years leading into the Key Stage One curriculum. There is a great focus placed on the Three Prime Areas – Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development. Our curriculum reflects this focus.

We also encourage them from the age of 3 to leave their nappies (unless there is a medical reason why they need to wear a nappy), bottles and dummies at home. It has been proven that speech is greatly improved when children stop using dummies and bottles at an early age. We want children to develop good speech and communication skills. Parents and Carers are asked to bring a change of clothes for children in case they have an accident. We have changing facilities on site and can support parents/carers in toilet training children through sticker charts and reward schemes.

Learning Environment

Each adult in the Early Years team is responsible for organising “weekly activities” in the room based around the 7 areas of learning linked to our topic. The Learning Environment within the Early Years unit is organised into the seven areas of learning both indoors and outdoors. Children can freely access resources in all areas. Labels, pictures and displays clearly indicate the resources available. The children are responsible for the tidying of resources with the support of the staff. The children are encouraged to show responsibility and respect for the environment.

Early reading

Fostering a love of reading is a huge focus at Harriers Banbury Academy. In Early Years we consistently encourage reading and the daily practice of reading within the structure of our day. Every week, each child is read with individually 3 times minimum. Children partake in daily phonics, and we also run second phonics lessons during the day to practice the skills that have been learned in the morning.

Phonics books are sent home every Monday that relate to the level that the children have currently been taught. Children are only progressed onto a new level once they have been taught the GPC that match the books.

We follow the Sounds Write Scheme of learning. Sounds Write is a validated scheme of learning. Within sounds Write, we follow the structure that teaches the sounds across 15 Units of learning. Each child is exposed to new sounds on a weekly basis. The core concept of Sounds write that makes it different from other schemes is that it teaches children the skills of blending; segmenting and phoneme manipulation rather than teaching sounds in isolation. Children are encouraged to build and create new words using their knowledge of these three areas, and this scheme helps to progress the children from Early Years to Year 6.

Parent Engagement

The link between teacher and parent is extremely important at Harriers Banbury Academy. We use Seesaw as our communication tool with parents to communicate letters and notices. Seesaw is also used to set and receive homework, and it is a good resource for allowing parents to ask any questions about their child's day.

Within the first 3 weeks of term we arrange "5 minute chats" with parents to discuss how their child has settled into the unit. This is on top of the 2 parent's evenings that coordinate with the rest of the school.

Parents are welcomed in termly for Stay and Play sessions which are structured to have themes such as "stay and read," or "stay and do maths." We also provide Phonics workshops to help with the home-school link.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding the children in Early Years is paramount to all staff. We follow the Safeguarding policy shared across the school. All entrances and exits to early years are secured with either handles that are above the height of children, or with magnetic safety locks that prevent any doors from being opened. Access to the garden is constantly available and there is no access into the school grounds during the day unless a visitor enters through reception. Risk Assessment are available.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to ensure that all children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum regardless of race, gender, ability or social background. Planning recognises the needs and abilities of all children, including those with special educational needs.

Health and Safety

All equipment used is carefully monitored for wear and tear. Children are encouraged to be independent but there is always an element of supervision to ensure their safety. Children are encouraged to use equipment safely, to carry it carefully (e.g. scissors, construction equipment etc) and also to put it away tidily leaving floors clear and uncluttered. Toilets are checked by staff throughout the day and a daily risk assessment takes place to ensure safety in the environment.

At least two members of staff working in the unit are paediatric first aid trained. The first aid box is clearly accessible. Medicines will only be administered in accordance to the school's policy. All emergency contact numbers are held in the school office alongside allergy and medical information.

Assessment and Record Keeping

All pupils are baselined at the start of their time at Harriers, using the government statutory baseline pack.

Children are assessed using DC Pro, and their data is recorded as PITA. Each child is regularly assessed on the work they produce in discrete lessons and the groups/ work they are set is differentiated accordingly.

Links with other policies In Early Years

We follow the school's policies for Behaviour, Child Protection, Equal Opportunities, Literacy, Anti-Bullying, Special Educational Needs, Intimate Care, SRE, Drug education, Health and Safety, and Teaching and Learning.

Staffing, Equipment and Resources

Our Foundation Stage Unit is led by an Early Years Co-ordinator. In the team there are also teachers for classes with pupils aged 3-5 and at least three other practitioners. We have a good minimum adult to child ratio of at least: 1:8 in Nursery. We employ extra practitioners to give a greater adult to child ratio on a daily basis. All staff are key workers for children in Foundation Stage.

All staff have their daily responsibilities listed in the office, this ranges from what intervention they will undertake that day to what children they are reading with or doing SEND intervention with.

Resources are made accessible to children and therefore there is an emphasis on taking responsibility for looking after our equipment and tidying up. Each child is given an area of the unit to tidy/pack away daily in the Reception classes and pupils in the Nursery classes are encouraged to help staff to tidy up. Staff support the children with this task and encourage independence.

Staff Development and Support

A clear appraisal cycle is in place for all staff in the school. This cycle offers opportunities to develop skills through CPD. Oxfordshire's 'Step into Training' is available for all EYU staff to access. Staff are encouraged to reflect on their current practices through briefing meetings. The EYU co-ordinator supports staff through regular in house training sessions and having an open door policy where everyone's ideas are listened to. Briefings are held every 2 weeks to discuss developments or address safeguarding issues.

Partnerships with the Parents/Carers, Community and Agencies

The involvement of family members in the Early Years is very important. All families are encouraged to be actively involved in the education of the children. We welcome families to come and help supporting us in educational visits. This support is also in the form of home activities. Children are given the opportunity to take books home and complete fun activities to support their learning. Regular community events are held to encourage children to feel like they belong (Covid 19 permitting). This includes working with the rest of the school for events such as fundraising, inviting community members into the school and going out to visit others in the surrounding area, such as singing Christmas Carols at the Church. With this in mind, we also work very closely with other professionals and agencies such as Family support, Social Services, Health Agencies (School Nurse, Health Visitors, SALT) and Community Support (PCSO).

See separate school risk assessment for detail on relevant Covid-19 procedures in place.