

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Revised September 2024 Rob Grosse and Katrina Sands

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfill 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, 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Herries applies to children who are aged from 24 months / rising 3 years old and until the 31st August following their fifth birthday.

Our Values and Aims

We provide a positive environment where children and their families are happy, secure and feel valued. We provide an atmosphere of mutual cooperation and trust where diversity is appreciated. We believe that everybody is different and special. We believe that playing should be fun and exciting and an intrinsic part of children’s learning. We believe that young children learn most effectively through the medium of play and need opportunities to explore both the indoor and the outdoor environment. We are an inclusive school and ensure all children have equal access to our curriculum. We aim to instill a lifelong love of learning and to foster in children the social skills they need for their own well being as well as to be able to contribute to the wider community. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all our staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Our Philosophy

Our philosophy of education is built upon the belief that exploration, creative and critical thinking and an enquiring mind in early childhood build foundations for learning that remain with us for the rest of our lives. We encourage children to become independent learners, confident to initiate their own ideas and become competent problem solvers. We believe that education in the Early Years Foundation Stage is vitally important preparation for a rewarding and fulfilling life. At Herries we follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework -January 2024:

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We believe that the strength of each child and their family is nurtured by effective partnerships and cooperative support between home and school. We encourage parents, families and members of the local community to become actively involved in the life of the school. We invite visitors to an assembly each week to share aspects of their lives and work so we may understand and celebrate diversity, learning from the achievements and successes of all and appreciating the contribution those in the local community make to the lives of others.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

At Herries we encourage every child to become a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. We recognize all the characteristics of effective learning children may display. 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, reward stickers, house points, and 'Golden Assembly' certificates to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning and behavior. We celebrate children as they strive to achieve the Herries values throughout their time at school. EYFS children have a 'shimmer' and 'shine' display board where their achievements at home and school may be celebrated. Our values are perpetuated through all personal and academic endeavours.

Herries Values

Happiness
Enthusiasm
Respect
Responsibility
Independence
Excellence
Sincerity

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and do not discriminate against children because of 'differences'. All children at Herries are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, abilities or gender preferences. All children and their families are valued within our school. We know that each individual child is special and will be given opportunities to achieve their best. We do this by taking account

of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning. In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with learning differences, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. At Herries, fundamental British values are promoted. These are democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty. At Herries we practice mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths, beliefs and for those without faith.

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 based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- 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 and 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.
- Children whose home language is not English are given the opportunity to achieve a good standard in the English language through play and learning.

It is important to us that all children in the EYFS are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards and to seek help when required.

Welfare

"Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them."

For the safety and wellbeing of our children we seek to provide the following:

- Promote the welfare of children.
- Promote good health, preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs.
- Ensure all adults who look after the children or who have unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

- Ensure that the premises, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for purpose
- Ensure that every child receives enjoyable and challenging learning and development experiences tailored to meet their needs.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures to secure the safety and well-being of the children.
- Staffing arrangements meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety.
- Health and safety checklists for the classroom/environments conducted weekly.
- Classroom risk assessments are displayed and adhered to.
- Children will always be within sight /hearing of staff.
- Appropriate child:staff ratios are adhered to and maintained.

Positive Relationships

At Herries we encourage every child to form independent and supportive relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

The Head of the Early Years Foundation Stage is Mrs Katrina Sands.

Behaviour

We encourage positive behaviour through positive reinforcement of good behaviour and rewards.

Parents as Partners

Parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we highly value the contribution that parents make. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role in educating the children.

- The children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher prior to starting at our nursery and Reception classes to help to ease the transition for them from home to school.
- We provide regular information meetings for parents to attend, for example on how young children learn to read, to write, how young children acquire early mathematical skills, how their speech and language develops and how young children are assessed. We offer parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress through parents' evenings and an end of year report.
- At the end of the EYFS in the summer term of Reception, each child will be given a summative report, detailing progress and achievement in all 7 areas of learning against the Early Learning Goals. Parents are invited to meet with teachers following receipt of this report.
- We encourage parents to communicate to their child's teachers about any concerns they may have.
- We organise a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents.

- We provide opportunities for parents to share their expertise in the classroom, for example, talking about their profession, reading a story to the children or demonstrating a skill.
- There are two formal meetings per year (Autumn and Spring term) for teachers and parents to discuss the child's progress and development.

All staff involved with the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them.

Enabling Environments

At Herries 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. Enabling environments are available indoors and outdoors. At Herries, we are fortunate to have facilities whereby children may enjoy PE lessons indoors and outdoors, access the beautiful woodlands a short walk away and where children may play on the timber trail, on grass or ride bikes and trikes on the courts, for example. Children in the EYFS may also enjoy indoor/ outdoor activities onto an outdoor covered area that has a safety surface to facilitate a variety of activities, including sand, water and messy play.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Upon entry into the Reception class at Herries a baseline assessment is completed. This assessment takes the form of observation and natural interactions with children playing and learning. It relies upon professional judgement and a good knowledge and understanding of each child. Conversations with parents and records from previous settings are also valued.

Planning takes place collaboratively between the teachers, children, parents and other staff involved. Throughout the week, we observe and evaluate the children's learning patterns, their child initiated play, their engagement, involvement and characteristics of effective learning. We use this information to ensure that planning and provision reflects identified needs and interests. Progress is carefully monitored and tracked to ensure that outcomes are good for all children. Activities are adapted and differentiated for those exceeding age related expectations or for those needing more support. These children can take advantage of open-ended activities that foster creative and critical thinking. Through spending quality time with the children, stimulating activities are provided that are either adult led or child initiated and carefully balanced to optimize learning and enjoyment. Plans are flexible to take account of the interests and needs of the children and to capitalise on spontaneous events, particularly those initiated by the children. Weekly evaluation of the provision provides information on which to base plans from day to day and week to week.

Assessment

Each child's levels of development are assessed against the Early Learning Goals. The children's achievements are regularly shared with parents alongside appropriate targets. The Dfe is given a summary of each child's achievement profile score at the end of the Reception year. This information is also used to report on the progress in each of the seven areas of development to parents in the end of year report. Children file their work in their learning box files and work books and this provides valuable evidence of learning and achievement. These box files are accessible to children and parents at all times and important in the celebration of children's progress.

The use of mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities.

Photographs will be taken by the EYFS key persons using the school ipads only for the purposes of sharing children's learning and development. Photographs may be uploaded onto the whole school newsletter and onto Google Classroom with parental consent. Photographs may also be shared on the school 's Instagram page where parental permission is given for marketing purposes. Herries staff do not use their mobile phones to make calls or to take photographs where EYFS children are present.

The Learning Environment

The EYFS learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely indoors and outdoors. There are areas where the children can be active or quiet. The school has an outdoor area and access to woodland. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children wider opportunities to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all seven areas of learning. The children can explore many different areas, find, locate and access resources and equipment independently. Our role play areas, resources and equipment is free from discrimination and stereotyping and reflects our inclusive ethos.

Learning and Development

At Herries 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. Children's learning is holistic.

Teaching and Learning Styles

Our policy on teaching and learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. Features that relate to the EYFS are:

- the partnership between staff and parents, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that staff have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- Our teaching and learning is inclusive of all children regardless of race, gender or culture and inclusive of children needing support with SEND and EAL.
- the 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;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children work towards the Early Learning Goals throughout the EYFS.
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement of children to communicate and demonstrate their learning.
- to develop independence and skills of reflection and evaluation during our celebration circles.
- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are shared with parents;

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

Playing and Exploring

“Children’s play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children’s development.”

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

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.

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 are given opportunities 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.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of three prime areas of learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical Development
- Personal, social and emotional development

Also four specific areas of learning:

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

● **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to listen, understand and speak in a range of situations.

● **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their gross and fine motor skills through coordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

● **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities. Children will be supported in developing Self-regulation, Managing Self and Building Relationships.

● **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest. They will be supported to develop skills of Comprehension, Word Reading and Writing.

- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop Number skills and Numerical Patterns and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about the past and present, people, culture, places, technology and the natural world.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children creating with materials and being able to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other. The prime areas of learning underpin the specific areas of learning. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. The balance between child and adult led activities will move towards adult-led activities in preparation for Year 1.

Communication and Language development at Herries involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment, to develop their confidence and skills at expressing themselves, and to speak and listen in a range of situations. All reasonable steps are taken to provide children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, to support their language development at home, and to ensure that they have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language.

Progress Check

The two year progress check is carried out for children between the ages of two and three years old. This provides parents and/or carers with a short written report of their child's development in the prime areas. At Herries parents receive a written report for all areas of learning during the Summer Term. Parent consultation evenings take place in the Autumn and Spring Terms and will identify the child's strengths as well as identify areas where the child's progress is less than expected.

Safeguarding in the EYFS at Herries

The whole school Safeguarding Policy applies to the EYFS and the named person for Safeguarding in the EYFS is Mrs Katrina Sands

(M 07724243902).

Photographs of children in the EYFS are taken for use in the whole school newsletter, Google Classroom and for marketing purposes where there is parental consent. Photos are taken using the school ipads. Herries Staff are not permitted to use their mobile phones to make calls or to take photographs where EYFS children are present.

Changing of children in EYFS

In situations where children need a change of clothes (if they are wet or soiled), the Key Workers within the EYFS will assist them. The welfare of the child is paramount; their privacy is respected at all times when they are changing or being changed. All children are encouraged to become independent and make a good attempt to try to undress themselves. Children in Nursery and Reception will use the toilet area for changing after toileting accidents. This is partly a private area but not screened completely from the classrooms. Children in Reception will use the toilet area for changing after toileting where needed.

Sun Protection

When the sun is shining and especially during the spring and summer months, children need to have a school sun cap in school and a bottle of fresh water. It is helpful if suncream can be applied before the school day begins. Staff will apply sunscreen to children as necessary using the child's own named bottle of suncream. If this is not available staff will apply Nivea sun cream (Factor 50 plus). If your child has any medical/allergy needs that require their own suntan lotion, please speak to Mrs Sharp / class teacher about the use of this during school. Children are encouraged to drink water throughout the day. They are given water or milk at morning break and lunchtime. In addition they have access all day long to their own water bottles and may use the water fountains too.

Child Protection

As a school EYFS staff are aware of the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM and know that this offence must be reported to the school's DSL who would inform the police and involve children's social care.

As a school we act as partners to Channel panels where we recognise signs such as engagement, intent and capability in children vulnerable to radicalisation and at risk of being drawn into terrorism.

As a school we will provide help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as problems emerge' in line with 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', 2023, and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', 2024.

Links:

Development Matters July 2021

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage](#)

Birth to 5 Matters:

<https://www.birthto5matters.org.uk/>

EYFS Statutory Framework September 2024

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/659d3e68aaae22001356dc46/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf

National Curriculum Key Stages 1-4 2014

[The national curriculum in England - Framework document](#)

Herries EYFS Handbook September 2023

https://docs.google.com/file/d/1HQJNRfDTbaZzbIU5vYI9ZhxX9w_R7bB3/edit?usp=doclist_api&filetype=msword

'Working Together to Safeguard Children', Gov.UK, December 2023

'Keeping Children Safe in Education', Gov.UK, 2024