



Our visions and values:

- Protecting children's right to play learn and have a voice.
- Keeping parents involved in children's development
- Governors and staff leading the way on quality
- Working partnership with health professionals and schools
- Being ethical, respectful and tolerant

Teaching and learning policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage in nursery schools

Status	Non-statutory
Review timetable	Annual
Responsible governors	Children's learning and development committee
Last review date	Spring 2025
Date of next review	Spring 2026
The policy is available for staff at:	School offices and shared drive
And for parents/carers at:	School website

Policy audit

Version	Revision date	Revised by	Section revised
Teaching & learning policy	A long time ago		
Record Planning and assessment	June 2013	Sandra Campbell	
Outdoor play policy	November 2014	Sandra Campbell	
Teaching & learning policy for the Early Years Foundation Stage in nursery schools	March 2017	Margaret Rees, Pat English & Pauline France	Incorporating newly-revised EYFS
V2, V3	July 2018 Autumn 2019	Helen Currie, Pat English, Naline Sabaroché	None
V4	Spring 2021	Helen Currie, Lindsay Read	Adding COVID guidelines, Class Dojo and Tales Toolkit, removing Appendix of EYFS
V5	January 2022	Helen Currie	Addition of references to Development Matters 2021; removal reference to ELEYS in Newham
V6	January 2023	Helen Currie	Detail on curricular goals
V7	February 2024	Helen Currie	Forest School
V8	March 2025	Alison Emmett	P2: noting the new descriptions of non-speaking descriptions of the Curricular Goals, p2: that our use of Tales Toolkit as a problem solving and conflict resolution support is embedded, p3: updated

			values, p4: CH Forest School sessions are Friday morning, p4, 5: removed references to COVID, p6: added definitions for ITERS, ECERS and SSTEW, p6: replaced Summer Fair with coffee mornings, p6: updated use of Tales Toolkit, p7: updated name of Family Hubs from Children & Family Centres, p7: updated Forest School session details, p8: added 'similarity', p8: clarified use of Development Matters frameworks
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Approval for children's learning and development committee

Name	Signature	Role	Date
Sally Davey		Chair CLD	20.3.25

"Early childhood is a period of momentous significance for people growing up in our culture. By the time this period is over, children will have formed conceptions of themselves as social beings, as thinkers, as language users and they will have reached certain decisions about their own abilities and their own worth" Margaret Donaldson

Introduction

Laying firm foundations for successful learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage of education in early years schools and settings covers one of the most important stages in a child's life, when young brains and bodies are developing rapidly. It is a time when children are exploring the world beyond their homes and forging new relationships with other children and adults. It is well recognised that high quality early years education makes a positive difference to children and that this can have a long-lasting effect on the way they learn, communicate with other people and value their own achievements through life.

At Church Hill and Low Hall Nursery Schools we recognise that high quality education is the entitlement of every child. Our teaching and learning policy summarises the key aspects of this high quality. Our teachers and early years educators ensure our policies are put into practice so that every child can become an independent learner, equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed choices and get on in the world.

With the publication of the new Development Matters 2021 document in September 2021, FANS took the opportunity to create our curricular goals which can be seen here:

<https://www.fans.waltham.sch.uk/pedagogy>

We created these goals using the Development Matter frame work, and our knowledge of what children need to learn before they leave us so that they can become, confident, resilient, communicative, and a good friend. Over the academic year of 2021- 22 we revised these goals as we established this document in our working practice. By November 2022, we had written 4 versions and published them in book form for our staff team. Since then we have written 4 goals for two-year-olds which are based on the Prime Areas and eight goals for 3 and 4 year olds based on the

Prime and Specific Areas. Our most additions are descriptions of non-speaking responses to the Curricular Goals.

At our schools we teach young children how to be successful learners and communicators. We recognise that from birth children have been learning and developing in the company of others. Learning thrives when children have developed a sense of wellbeing and self-worth. We build on what each child currently is like as a learner. We teach children how to get along and learn together and belong as a member of the schools' learning community. We teach positive learning and thinking patterns that will help children become life-long learners and develop as unique, curious and tolerant individuals.

We lay these firm foundations by focussing on these three characteristics of effective learning:

1. playing and exploring together and being willing to 'have a go',
2. active learning by being involved and concentrating, persevering and enjoying new learning challenges,
3. creating and thinking critically, using the imagination and thinking skills to make new connections and discover creative solutions. Using Tales Toolkit as a resource to help scaffold children's imaginative storytelling and develop conflict resolution is embedded. This resource is key to our teaching of reading and love of story.

We nurture patterns of thinking and learning, such as self-direction, concentration and perseverance, exploration and problem-solving, making connections, and creating new ideas. Children become skilled learners and thinkers as they play and interact together in the company of interested and sensitive adults. So we promote a learning culture in our schools where adults tune into young children as they play and explore. Adults listen with respect to children's shared ideas and thoughts. Adults cultivate children's natural curiosity and eagerness to learn and continue to build on their discoveries and fascinations with the world.

We plan and provide a comprehensive early years curriculum which includes this approach to learning alongside all the areas of learning and development (as defined in the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage framework 2021).

Our School values and principles

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Children have rights to play, learn and be heard2. Parents/carers are a child's first educators.3. Teamwork and leadership are essential to delivering quality.4. Children make progress when professionals work together and share information. |
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5. We believe in being ethical, respectful and tolerant. We set out our values and principles in all our policies and in this policy we describe our principled approach to outstanding teaching and learning within the context of a national Early Years Foundation Stage framework.

The details of how staff assess, plan and teach children are available in other information booklets, documents and on our school website.

1. Children's rights to play, learn and be heard

"A child's pride in knowing and doing must be recognised and supported. Shame of not understanding, or of not being understood, is destructive of learning. The child who is proud to learn and whose pride is recognised with admiration will learn." Colwyn Trevarthan.

We know that children learn at different rates and in many different ways and each is at an individual stage of development. We believe all children have the capacity to grow, learn, and develop, and to do this they rely on caring relationships with other people. We know that children learn best when they are happy, secure and actively involved in their own learning. Children can only achieve a sense of their own value when they know they are listened to and understood by the people that matter to them.

We recognise the uniqueness of every child and we welcome the diversity of experiences young children bring to our schools' communities. Our planned teaching and learning uphold every child's right to play and learn in safety and the right to be listened to and given firm foundations for future learning.

It is our policy to:

- employ experienced and qualified educational staff who know how to assess, plan and support children to learn in the ways that suit them best and that promote new learning.
- provide welcoming, secure and stimulating nursery school environments where all children feel included and confident to learn, take part and progress.
- provide varied and fascinating opportunities indoors and outdoors where children can continue to learn through play and exploration, including a wide variety of trips including Forest School.
- provide a play-based curriculum indoors and outdoors where children can develop and build on earlier learning, be active, enthusiastic, thoughtful, and responsive learners.
- provide space, time, and experienced educational support so that every child can develop self-esteem, independence, and a voice to express her/his unique identity, needs, and interests.
- track and assess the children's learning through observations and discussion to adapt teaching to suit children's individual interests, strengths, and lines of development.
- provide appropriate early intervention so that children receive additional specialist help where needed.
- We provide Forest School at both nursery schools: At Church Hill our class teacher and an EYP work with the Walthamstow School for Girls (with a group of year 9 girls) to provide a session on Friday mornings. At Low Hall our assistant headteacher runs a session on site on Tuesday mornings and afternoons. By the end of the school year all 3 and 4 year olds have had a six week block, with children from lower income families having more experience. These sessions help children to experience the natural world as they play and helps each child to build resilience, work with tools and explore the natural environment. These session help children to work together as a group, being kid to their peers, and to nature.

2. Parental Involvement

We strongly believe that staff and families share the responsibility for a child's learning, development, and progress. We know it is important to listen to parents and children's first carers, and work closely with those who have helped children to develop, grow, and learn in their earliest years of life. It is our policy to ensure all parents can be actively involved in their child's continuing learning at school and at home. We build in opportunities for parents to have a say and contribute their knowledge, skills, and experience throughout the time their children are in school.

We nurture a home/school relationship based on mutual respect, trust, and information-sharing. We use Class Dojo as a tool for sharing the learning that has been taking part during the school day. We

invite families to use this platform to share their 'wow' moments from home too. This enables staff to build up a broader picture of each child's interests and development points, and ensures that staff can plan extension activities to interest and promote further learning and development.

It is our policy to:

- Invite parents to attend the weekly stay and play sessions, 'Visiting Day', and to bring their child for three visits prior to starting nursery.
- Operate a key person system so that each family has one special person with whom they can discuss their child's learning and development. The key person builds up this relationship starting from visits to the nursery and sometimes a home visit prior to the child starting nursery.
- Observe together how the child plays and explores, communicates, and interacts with others. Together parents and key person build up a picture of the child's learning in their Special Book and records of achievement.
- Share insights about the child's new learning and progress towards early learning goals with parents. Parents share information with the key person about things that their child is doing at home or about any significant changes in their child's life. We use Class Dojo as a way of sharing this learning and progress.
- Encourage parents to stay with their children until they are settled so that they have a positive start to each day.
- Encourage parents to take part in learning alongside their child at school.
- Promote and support home-based learning through Class Dojo
- Ensure parents can meet with the key person twice a year to discuss the child's learning and their record of achievement, and to develop their child's next steps. The key person also meets at the end of the school year to share the end of year report with the family.
- Make it possible for parents to speak to their child's key person or the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDco) if they have any concerns about their child's development.
- Offer parent workshops during the year about the teaching and learning in the early years, phonics and literacy, and other curriculum areas. This year we will do these remotely via Zoom or in person.
- Consult with Parents/carers on the quality of education at our schools for example through our Listening Week.
- Support the families to support the learning and development of their child by sharing activity ideas and using Class Dojo.

3. Governors and staff leading on quality

Our schools have a well-deserved reputation for offering outstanding early education to all children from a diversity of language, cultural, and social backgrounds. We have a long-established tradition of providing high quality teaching and support for learning so that all children make excellent progress towards the early learning goals. Our inclusive approach to early education is so successful that we lead the way in ensuring that all children reach their true potential.

It is our policy to develop professional expertise and share leadership on aspects of teaching and learning across our schools. We recognise that governors, parents, and staff learn from meeting and talking together about early years education, and we build in different ways for sharing knowledge and expertise.

Governors and staff are committed to upholding our high standards and to providing high-quality teaching in our indoor and outdoor educational environments.

To do this senior school leaders and governors work together to:

- employ qualified teachers, special educational needs staff, and early years educators.
- develop professional expertise in early years education through a comprehensive and continuous training and development programme. Education staff keep up-to-date on national initiatives and early childhood research.
- ensure staff are familiar with the characteristics of effective learning and work in teams with a focus on children's learning, achievement, and good progress.
- Ensure all staff use the national Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework to plan for all areas of learning and to assess how well children are progressing towards the national early learning goals.
- Ensure staff use assessments and information from parents to resource the educational environments, indoors, and outside, and plan timetabled activities each day.
- monitor the quality of teaching and learning through learning walks by school leaders and governors, and staff peer observations. SLT also use the Infant/toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS) and the Early Education Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) to collate information on our learning environments, and use this information to develop our learning. The governors use the Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Wellbeing scale (STTEW) to collate evidence during learning walks.
- monitor the accuracy of assessment information and support analysis of the information to identify how teaching can extend learning for individual children and groups.
- Ensure senior staff have the time and resources to lead on curriculum planning, monitoring the quality of the indoor and outdoor environment, and collaborative teamwork.
- Allocate time and resources to leaders on assessment for learning, the delivery of literacy, maths, and science through focus group activities and curriculum enrichment activities such as trips and visits.
- Develop the knowledge and expertise of key governors and members of the Children's Learning and Development Committee which meets termly to discuss teaching and learning and how the staff are delivering high-quality early years education.
- Organise events such as International Day, coffee mornings, and performances.
- Use Tales Toolkit to develop children's storytelling language, imagination, problem solving, and conflict resolution.
- Share educational expertise to provide appropriate early intervention and accurate identification so that children receive additional specialist help where needed
- Build in time and resources for the development of professional partnerships.
- Share our practice through training local groups through the LBWF Systems Leadership Training package for which FANS provides training.

4. Partnership Work

Close partnership work with parents and other agencies can benefit and improve the progress children make in their learning and development in their earliest years in educational establishments. Together we make sure that each child learns, progresses well, and achieves their full potential.

More and more young children experience multiple changes in their earliest years of life.... moving from parent to minder, from home to playgroup/preschool, from playgroup to school, and from nursery school to primary school. We know that partnership work is vital to support children through these changes and to ensure they continue to learn. It is important that their prior achievements are known and valued as the foundations for new learning.

Where there are concerns about learning early intervention is crucial, and we work very closely with professionals such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, physiotherapists, specialist teachers of the deaf, health visitors, social care, and 'Early Help'.

It is our policy to maintain partnerships through:

- Key person discussions with parents about observations of the children at play. In discussions we identify children's individual needs, and plan and adapt the teaching where appropriate.
- The professional meetings between the schools' SENDcos and Health and Early Help professionals.
- Regular contact with Family Hubs and local early years settings to enhance young children's transitions into our schools.
- Regular contact with local schools to make sure that the children have a seamless transition in to the next stage of their learning, including the West Walthamstow partnership (WWP).
- Sharing information, records of achievement, and other educational data with other professional colleagues.
- Working in peer groups in Early Learning networks on aspects of early childhood education, in particular the East London Early Years and Schools Partnership (ELEYSP).

5. Respectful, tolerant, and ethical behaviour

Research shows children from an early age build up concepts about themselves and others which can become deep-rooted and entrenched. It is our policy to prevent the negative effects of discriminatory attitudes and behaviour on every young child, and to establish the positive values of respect and tolerance for diversity. When starting school, children have the chance to broaden their horizons by meeting new and different people, and learning from a rich and varied school environment.

At Church Hill and Low Hall Nursery Schools we have a strong commitment to provide equality of opportunity for all our children and families, ensuring that Cultural Capital is a focus for all children, but particularly for those from lower income families. We extend beyond the EYFS framework for learning and development and children's welfare and safeguarding in our planned curriculum. We teach children to appreciate and look after the natural environment and to conserve energy and resources. We encourage children and their families to share ideas on ethical and sustainable living and travelling.

We provide Forest School at both nursery schools: At Church Hill our class teacher runs a session on Monday mornings. At Low Hall our assistant headteacher runs a session on site on Tuesday mornings and afternoons. By the end of the school year all 3 and 4 year olds have had a six week block, with children from lower income families having more experience. These sessions help children to experience the natural world as they play, and helps each child to build resilience, work with tools, and explore the natural environment. These session help children to work together as a group, being kind to their peers and to nature.

It is our policy to:

- provide the best educational resources and teaching to develop an understanding of social and moral values, encourage respect, empathy, and tolerance of all kinds of diversity.
- ensure all children can play and learn in a safe, secure environment where their unique cultural identity can be nurtured.
- ensure all of the children have equal access to the EYFS curriculum and can develop as independent and participating learners in planned and spontaneous learning activities. We will adapt plans, resources, and teaching methods to achieve this end.
- challenge any discriminatory behaviours, language, and attitudes that may otherwise be a barrier to learning for any child at school.

- teach children to respect each other's right to have a happy and successful experience at school through Tales Toolkit modelling of problem solving.
- empower children to say when they don't feel safe or happy.
- celebrate each other's uniqueness and similarity.
- teach children to look after the natural environment.
- teach children about all aspects of sustainability in the modern world.

Legislation and policy monitoring matters

All our schools' policies comply with the most recent national legislation and guidance. This teaching and learning policy has been reviewed and revised to cover all the statutory requirements for the learning and development of young children requirements as described in the national Early Years Foundation (EYFS) framework.

Our planned and taught curriculum incorporates national curriculum requirements and guidance (for example Development Matters) alongside our chosen learning priorities. Through regular monitoring and learning walks we ensure our teaching comprehensively includes all the EYFS required 7 areas of learning (see appendix) and our additional priorities of play and exploration, active learning, creativity and critical thinking, problem-solving and reasoning, and sustainability and ethical behaviour.

Our assessment process is fully compliant with the EYFS requirements (see appendix), and through regular monitoring, moderation meetings, and an annual pupil progress meeting we ensure all assessment practice:

- focuses on getting to know each child from the very beginning
- Is consistent and accurate so we have a unique picture of each child's interests, achievements, and new learning objectives
- Involves discussions and information from parents
- Uses close observation in structured as well as incidental ways
- Draws on written observations which are analysed using the Areas of learning, Characteristics of effective learning, and Child's level of development frameworks, as described in 'Development Matters'.
- Assessments and data analysis lead to action for the child, identifying the next steps of development and any specialist support needed as we collate where children lie in our curricular goal milestones to help us plan for groups.
- Ensures children are involved in this process through their 'Special books' so that each child has detailed observations about their learning which are used to plan next steps.
- Assessments in children's books are annotated with information about the characteristics of effective learning. The executive headteacher and senior leadership team review learning in a variety of ways including learning walks, ECERs, book looks, and School Improvement Partner and Governor Walks.

It is our practice to review and adapt our curriculum and relevant assessment, planning, and teaching and learning guidance regularly (annually,) and in each review we take account of national legislative changes and local priorities.

Further details of the EYFS framework can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf.

Keys to other school policies

- Different but Equal, Inclusion, Equality, and SEND
- Behaviour Policy: Getting Along Together,
- Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions and Transitions
- Complaints policy and procedures

Contact Information

Helen Currie leads on assessment and sustainability. At Low Hall, Naline Sabaroche leads on SEND and teaching and learning; at Church Hill Pat English leads on Teaching and Learning and SEND. Lindsay Read leads on Literacy across both schools. Lindsay Read collates the planning at both schools. Lindsay also leads on e-learning which we use to share play ideas, communicate with parents, and offer curriculum if the school closes in an emergency, such as a pandemic or extreme weather.

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