

THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM AT HOLMER ACADEMY

What is The Early Years Foundation Stage?

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to all children from birth to five.

In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. The Early Years Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage are aimed at;

- Allowing your child to develop as a unique child.
- Allowing your child to develop positive relationships.
- Allowing your child to learn within enabling environments.
- Allowing your child to experience opportunities that will enable them to learn and develop.

These principles are delivered through seven areas of learning. Three are considered 'prime' areas - these are Physical Development, Communication and Language, and Personal, Social, and Emotional development.

The four specific areas, through which the prime areas are developed, are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design.

Each of these areas of learning hold equal importance and are all interconnected. They are delivered through a careful balance of adult directed and child initiated activities.

This is our philosophy:

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Holmer Academy we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

These are our aims:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs;
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond;
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development;

- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress;
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self confidence;
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions;
- Ensure that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development;

What does the EYFS look like in our school?

We know play is a vital part of learning. So through planned play, our children explore and develop their learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas and learn how to control themselves, take responsibility for their actions and understand the need for rules. We give them the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. We support and encourage our pupils to communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. We provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes and encourages our pupils to express themselves freely and share any fears they may have with confidence and allows them to make any mistakes in a controlled and safe way.

This is what you might typically see

- Children learning through playing and exploring, being active, and through creating and thinking critically in the indoors and outside areas.
- Happy and engaged learners
- Children accessing wide range of play-based activities independently.
- Adult-led activities ensure that children access all areas of the curriculum.
- Paired/group work
- A range of different learning opportunities that are carefully planned to support children's development in all areas of learning including practically and use of technology
- Engagement and perseverance
- Self-motivated children
- Children talking about, sharing and reflecting on their learning

This is how we know how well our pupils are doing:

- Adults will observe during this play to provide information for assessments. At times, adults will intervene in order to enhance the learning opportunities.
- We document your child's progress through adding photographs and observations to your child's online 'Learning Journey'.
- Tracking through development matters age bands.
- Pupil progress meetings
- Teacher assessment/ targets
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- Targeted use of TAs- TAs noting and recording observations of individual

This is how we challenge the higher attainers/rapid graspers:

- Differentiation is planned from very start of lesson
- Small group work to further challenge
- Specific teaching that revolves around more complex and challenging tasks.
- Specific skills are taught that allow the children to demonstrate working above age expectation