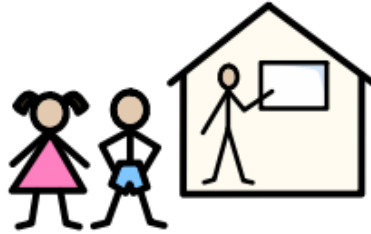


Fiveways School Curriculum Policy



Early Years



Policy Review

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
As Required	25.04.24	Sam Ensor	As Required

Policy Ratification

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Malcolm Gulliver		26.04.24
Head Teacher	Swavek Nowakiewicz		26.04.24

Details of Policy Updates

Date	Details
April 2024	Policy updated to clarify assessment section

Fiveways School

A Specialist School for Communication & Interaction

Updated April 2024



“What does a good life look like for me now and in the future?”

Curriculum Policy



Early Years

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Curriculum Policy
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Preparation for Adulthood Policy
- CEIAG: Careers Information Advice & Guidance
- Remote Home Learning Policy

Safeguarding

Fiveways School adopts a rigorous approach and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

School Aims

- To create a happy and secure learning environment rich in stimulation and challenge.
- To ensure all members of the school community can grow in self-esteem and develop to their full potential.
- To provide developmentally related experiences responding to pupils' individual needs.
- To provide pupils with an education appropriate to the world beyond the classroom.
- To develop pupils' communication and interaction skills enabling them to make positive relationships and decisions, and giving them more control over their lives.

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Guiding principles for our Early Years provision

- Every child is different and unique. We personalise teaching and learning to each child to make sure that the curriculum is relevant, reflects their strengths, needs and interests. Every child has Personalised Learning Goals (PLGs) and milestones based on a strengths and needs analysis
- We follow all areas of the EYFS curriculum, placing the greatest emphasis on the prime areas of the curriculum: Communication, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development.
- From the beginning we teach children the skills they need for learning in school, the wider community and as preparation for adulthood.
- Strong partnerships with parents and other professionals allows us to meet children's individual needs holistically. Parents' unique knowledge of their child is vital in enabling us to really get to know children from the beginning, and finding out what motivates them.
- Children learn through play. Alongside structured teaching, we provide planned play opportunities, building on past experiences, supporting children to explore and discover.

The Early Years Curriculum at Fiveways

Our Early Years curriculum builds a strong foundation to ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships and to help them thrive emotionally and physically. It is the start of their preparation for adulthood journey. There are seven areas of learning and development.

Pupils at Fiveways have severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities so the reception year at Fiveways has particular focus on the three prime areas of learning:

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

Learning in these areas builds firm foundations in developing vital communication skills, social and learning behaviours which will prepare and support them in their future learning journeys. They are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas

The four specific areas of learning are also important and interconnected, providing important contexts for children's learning through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. They provide a broad range of rich, meaningful and motivating first-hand experiences in which pupils explore, think creatively and are active:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

We work on these areas, in a way that promotes and enhances learning in one or more of the prime areas for learning at the same time.

Pupils have individual, paired and group learning opportunities. Group times increase as they progress through the year and their motivation and engagement increases. We create a stimulating environment to encourage pupils to free-flow between inside and out.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

These are the behaviours children use in order to learn. They include skills around engagement, motivation and thinking. We provide opportunities to develop these abilities and attitudes in all areas of learning and interact with their play to stretch and challenge them. The characteristics of effective learning support children to learn and make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and create good foundations for their next stages as they progress through school and for life beyond school.

Prime Area: Communication and Language

This area of the curriculum is broken down into the following sub areas:

- Listening and Attention
- Understanding
- Speaking

This area of learning is a key focus for the majority of children starting in reception at Fiveways, and is taught across the whole school day.

Communication is at the heart of everything we do in Early Years. We work closely with the onsite Communication and Interaction Team to develop early communication skills with all the children.

We use a total communication approach at Fiveways, supporting children to develop their communication using intensive interaction, objects of reference, photos, symbols, communication books/ boards and Sign-along signing alongside speaking.

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Develops strong relationships by having their needs met and views listened to.
- Experiences the joy of connecting with another person through communication and interaction.
- Develops and extends their communication in a way which reflects their individual needs and strengths.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This area of the curriculum is broken down into the following sub areas:

- Self-Regulation
- Managing Self
- Building Relationships

Self-Regulation: Starting school is a big step for all children. We help children to learn the personal skills such as understanding their own feelings, developing focus and attention skills, waiting for what they want, and making decisions about what they want to do.

Managing Self: We work on developing children's confidence, independence, resilience, perseverance and beginning to manage their behaviour. We also help children become more independent around dressing, eating and toileting.

Building Relationships: Supporting children to learn to work and play together is at the heart of the EYFS at Fiveways and happens throughout the day, including during specific interventions such as TAC PAC and Intensive Interaction.

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Feels happy and secure in school.
- Has fun in school and is able to be themselves.
- Begins to develop the skills needed to form positive relationships with others, including friendships with peers.
- Begins their journey to understanding fundamental British values

Prime Area: Physical Development

This area of the curriculum is broken down into the following sub areas:

- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills

We promote an active lifestyle to help children stay fit and healthy. We also find that specific physical activities help many children to regulate themselves and be focused and ready to learn. We work with other professionals e.g. physiotherapists and occupational therapists to meet the needs of individual children, set PLGs and plan ant individual programmes.

Gross motor skills are developed by moving and playing in the classroom, in PE, outdoor play, dance, the school grounds e.g. Woodland Walk, and for some children, hydrotherapy, physiotherapy and a MOVE programme.

Fine motor skills are carefully planned for and include mark making, threading, and using lots of sensory play with things like rice, playdough and cornflour. Children need to develop

their skills in using “big” gross body movements first to help them move onto the skills needed for more fine motor work and writing.

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Develops the skills to enable them to enjoy physical activity at school, with families and in the wider community.
- Begins, based on individual capabilities, to understand how to keep themselves healthy.
- Develops the physical skills to enable them to become more independent.

Specific Area: Literacy

This area of the curriculum is broken down into the following sub areas:

- Reading
- Writing

Literacy teaching and learning has a strong multisensory core at Fiveways. We bring our stories, rhymes and songs to life using real objects and musical instruments to aid children’s understanding and enjoyment of stories. We provide opportunities to explore mark making in different ways, using sensory materials such as rice, shaving foam, cornflour and sand to build confidence and skills.

For children who are ready to access more structured literacy activities, small group and individual support allow us to build on individual interests and skills.

We use a differentiated phonics programme, which begins by focusing on developing early phonological awareness e.g. listening skills and the ability to differentiate between environmental sounds. Children who are ready progress on to Phase 2 Phonics, we follow the phonics programme ‘Essential Letters and Sounds.’

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Develops a love of literacy through sharing a wide range of book and stories.
- Has access to a high quality phonics programme which delivers phonics learning at a level appropriate to each individual.
- Develops the skills and control needed for mark making.
- Sees reading, writing and mark making practiced by adults as well as children.

Specific Area: Mathematics

This area of the curriculum is broken down into the following sub areas:

- Number
- Numerical Patterns

In the Early Years, Maths is taught in a very practical way, providing opportunities for children to understand the way numbers and counting work through real, hands on exploration. The children learn an awareness of number through rhymes, sorting, counting and organising and cooking.

We build elements of maths into many of our daily routines e.g. counting how many children at hello time, using mathematical language such as more/ less and bigger/ smaller at snack time.

Our whole class and group specific maths sessions promote enjoyment and understanding for all children and often have a strong sensory component.

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Has access to motivating activities which promote the use and understanding of mathematical language.
- Develops a secure base for understanding number and other mathematical concepts.
- Begins to understand how maths is used in the wider world.
- Enjoys open ended maths exploration as well as activities tailored to meet their individual needs.

Understanding the World

This area of the curriculum is broken down into the following sub areas:

- Past and Present
- Culture and Communities
- The Natural World

‘Understanding the World’ involves helping children to make sense of their physical world and their community through learning opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology, and the environment. For many of our pupils at Fiveways, this learning focuses on supporting children to understand and use all of their senses to explore safely.

We provide learning opportunities for real personal experiences e.g. visiting the park to explore local spaces, connecting with the natural world through weekly sessions in our

Woodland Walk, and meeting visiting members of the local community such as police and firefighters.

We celebrate children's news from home, as well as celebrating birthdays and talking about changes e.g. looking at baby photos and exploring role play around babies.

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Starts to understand the world around them, progressing outwards from what is more familiar to what is less familiar.
- Is motivated and excited by using their senses to engage / explore the world, becoming more confident in investigating and finding out.
- Begins to share information and stories e.g. from home and understand about changes over time.

Expressive Arts and Design

This area of the curriculum is broken down into the following sub areas:

- Exploring and Using Media and Materials
- Being Imaginative

This area of learning includes art, design, music, dance and role play. We encourage children to express themselves and explore different ways of moving, exploring sensory materials, playing instruments, and using our voices.

We provide lots of opportunities for children to express preferences and choose and use materials and resources in an open-ended way, helping them to make choices and to have confidence in beginning to represent their own ideas and feelings. We support pupils to be curious, engage with and explore resources in different ways, sensitively introducing them to a range of different textures and materials.

We play alongside children, modelling using imagination in role play, small world play, with puppets and when acting out our sensory stories.

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Has the opportunity to explore different ways of express themselves using a range of media and materials.
- Begins to manage sensory sensitivities through repeated careful exposure to different materials.
- To develop and express preferences within the arts and find at least one area that they really enjoy.
- Develops fine and gross motor skills through these activities.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The three characteristics of effective learning are:

- **Playing and Learning:** Children investigate and experience things and have a go.
- **Active Learning:** Children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- **Creating and Thinking Critically:** Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning describe behaviours children use in order to learn. We provide opportunities and extend children's play in ways that foster and build on their innate curiosity, energy and enthusiasm. They provide the bedrock for children's learning and enable children to make progress across all areas throughout their whole school career and on into adulthood.

Through structured learning and play opportunities we aim to ensure that each child:

- Has opportunities to explore and investigate in an open ended way.
- Makes independent choices based on their own interests.
- Develops focus and engagement across a range of different activities.
- Wants to share their interests, discoveries and achievements.
- Begin to manage disappointments and keep trying when they don't achieve what they wanted to straight away.

Transitions

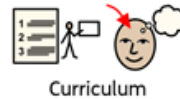
Transitions into school are carefully planned via school entry planning meetings with parent carers, nurseries, preschools and other professionals involved to ensure children have the best possible start. Wherever possible, children and their parent carers are offered school visits and sessions prior to starting to develop familiarity with the school, staff and other children. They receive information with photos or video of the school and who will be working with them. Each year an open evening is held where all children and their families can visit school to meet staff and explore the school and its grounds.

Children in the EYFS may enter at different times of the year for a variety of reasons and we fully understand and support that each transition requires a unique and often different approach. However, we aim to have all children start full time in September.

Children may spend one or more years in reception class depending on pupil intake. In the final term of their time in reception class the teacher liaises with their next class to discuss their learning strengths and needs to inform planning and smooth transition. Wherever possible, there are 'moving up days'. Parent carers are also consulted and introduced to their new teacher.

To ensure continuous learning, progression and sequence the curriculum is mapped from early years into key stage 1 / main school curriculum areas. Children in reception class and EYFS are also included in lower department working as appropriate which supports smooth transition and to avoid 'dips in learning'.

Refer to Figure 1. Curriculum Framework Map



"What does a good life look like for me now and in the future?"

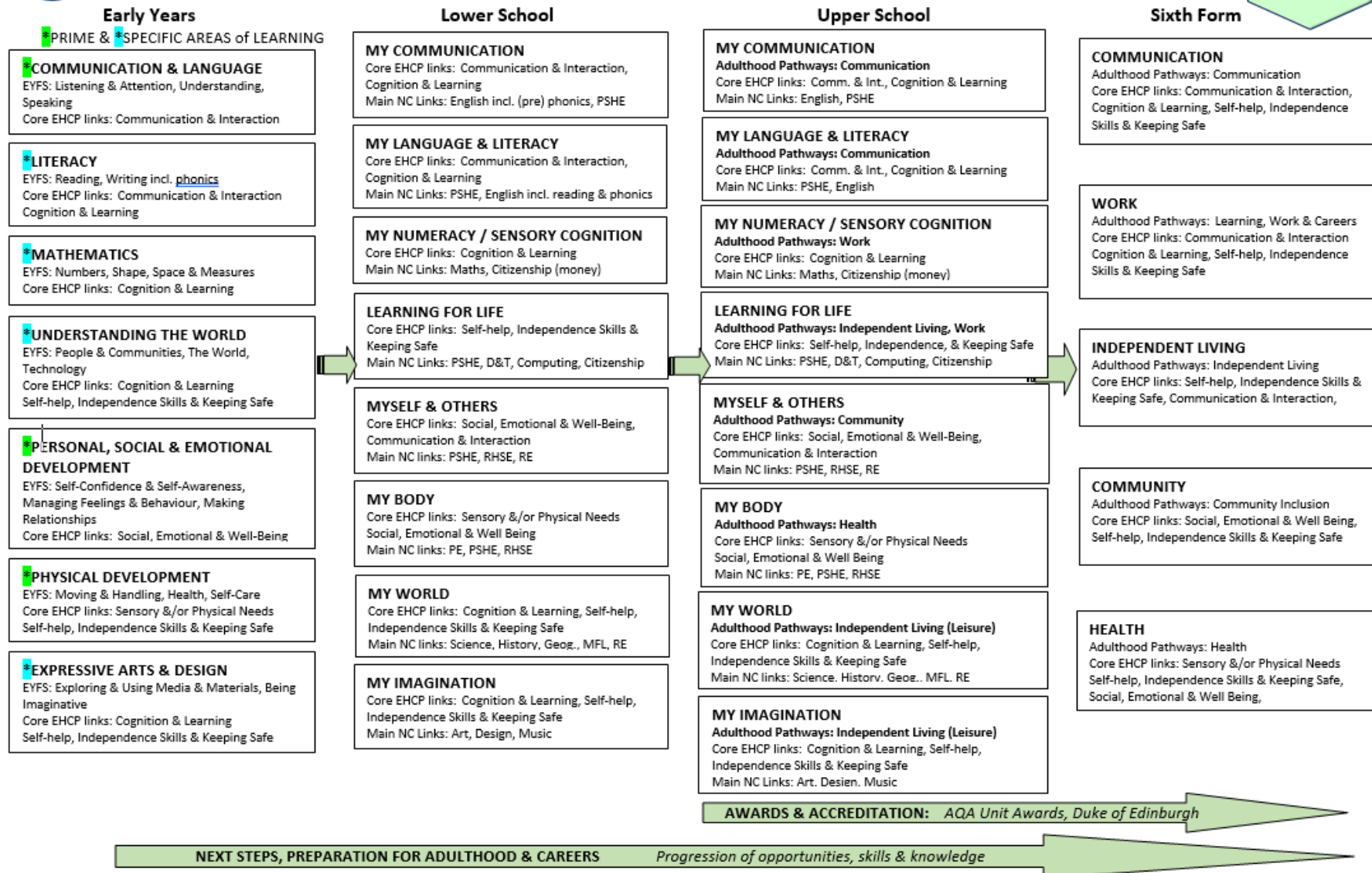


Figure 1. framework map

Assessment

Refer also to Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy

Assessment is an integral part of daily curriculum delivery. Teaching staff continuously observe, assess, celebrate and respond to learning and achievement no matter how small. Recording is carried out on a daily basis, using school wide consistent systems, to identify progress and areas of challenge towards Personal Learning Goal (PLG) milestones and to inform next steps.

Based on information from EHCP, pre-entry planning meeting and professional reports etc. the teacher does a strengths and needs analysis to inform initial child centred planning and “settling in” PLG milestones. During their first 6 to 7 weeks in school children are then continuously and formatively assessed so that meaningful and accurate PLG milestones can be confirmed. These are reviewed and updated again as appropriate during the autumn term.

Within 6 weeks of attending school at Fiveways children are assessed by the teacher using the DfE Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

Within the first term at school there is a ‘Settling in Review’ which provides an opportunity to review progress, strengths and needs and PLGs with parent carers. Teaching staff are also in regular weekly contact with parent carers through home / school communication systems to ensure we are responsive to children’s learning needs and development.

Assessment by our Communication and Interaction team ensures children are provided with appropriate communication systems as soon as possible. These are reviewed and developed throughout the year as children grow and develop.