

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy



Hazel Oak School

To be reviewed July 2026

Agreed by Governors on

Signed by.....Chair of Governors

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Introduction

Children at Hazel Oak have a broad range of educational needs such as complex autism, ADHD and moderate - severe learning difficulties. They have joined us from a variety of routes such as; pre-school, private day care, mainstream nursery, mainstream reception class settings or referrals from multi agency support teams. All pupils at Hazel Oak have an EHCP.

Hazel Oak Aims:

- To provide a happy, caring, safe and secure environment for learning, where warm and secure relationships are developed between pupils and adults.
- To provide a total communication environment where pupils are enabled to use their preferred method of communication to communicate independently and confidently.
- To provide pupils with the opportunity to participate within a broad, balanced and enriched early years curriculum in line with the statutory framework for the EYFS and the pupils own EHCP outcomes identified.
- To provide pupils with the opportunity to access a curriculum that focuses on developing play skills.
- To provide an environment that supports pupils with developing their independence so they can access the world around them and prepare them for life opportunities.
- To develop a close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers
- To provide an environment where every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
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Foundation Stage Philosophy

At Hazel Oak School we passionately believe in the Early Years Framework and associated philosophy of learning through play and opportunities allowing children to explore and experiment with the world around them. We believe that all pupils are entitled to the best educational experiences that can be offered, and we recognise that a play based, pupil-centered curriculum is vital for our younger pupils to encourage outstanding progress. Our curriculum is broad, balanced, appropriately adapted and provides challenge. We want our pupils to feel safe and secure and valued as individuals and be educated in an atmosphere which is positive, stimulating and motivating. At Hazel Oak, independence and positive attitudes to learning are fostered and each pupil is encouraged to reach their full potential regardless of their ethnic, socio – economic background, race, gender or ability.

We believe that it is important to work in partnership with parents and carers and we encourage parents to come into school to join us for events and more focused meetings such as progress updates about their pupil.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the Early years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf

3. Structure of the EYFS

We are a local maintained special school and take children from 4 years old into our EYFS.

Within Hazel Oak setting we have 3 EYFS classes, these children work within the Early Years framework. The children in our EYFS classes are not based on the age expected abilities but instead on their cognitive developmental level. However, Apple Class is the class most reception aged children will start their time at Hazel Oak. At Hazel Oak, with in early years setting we take a holistic, child centered approach and therefore cater to individual needs of the children.

Consequently, class groups, including our EYFS are a mix of ages. Most of our children require specialist support from multi agencies. All children have an EHCP.

4. Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2025 EYFS statutory framework.

The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and inter-connected. 3 areas, known as the prime areas, are seen as particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
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The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

A unique child

We celebrate the uniqueness of each child by offering personalised learning opportunities and through working closely with families and professionals from other settings who have knowledge of the child. In our school every child matters.

Our skilled professionals understand the process involved in children's growth, development and learning. The curriculum and the opportunities we offer are designed to help children develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and we accommodate this in the provision we offer.

Positive Relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent through secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families and carers.

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We recognise the role that parents and carers have played, and will continue to play, in educating their children. At Hazel Oak, our reception pupils are often based in Apple class. They are assigned a 'Key Person' whilst in Reception, this is often the class teacher.

- We talk to parents about their child before their child starts in our School;
- We communicate with previous nurseries and schools prior to the child's arrival.
- We observe children in their current setting before joining Hazel Oak.
- We give children an opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school as part of our transition in the summer term.
- We invite parents and carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school;
- We offer parents regular formal and informal opportunities to talk about their child's development; through phone calls, face-to-face meetings, Tapestry online journal and home school diary.
- Parents are linked to their child's electronic observations via Tapestry and are encouraged to respond with learning that has taken place outside of school;
- We provide parent's with an annual written report detailing their child's progress.

Enabling Environments

At Hazel Oak School, we recognise that the physical and human environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We observe the children and assess their interests, development and learning, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their children's learning.

The three characteristics of effective teaching and learning in the Early Years are:

Playing and Exploring

Children's play reflects their wide-ranging interests and preoccupations. We believe that through play young children achieve their highest learning potential. Playing with peers is especially important for children's development.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious 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. We give children a degree of independence and control over their learning. As they develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions, and this provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creativity and Thinking Critically

When children have opportunities to play and engage 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.

We give children opportunities to be creative in all areas of learning. Adults support children's thinking and help them to make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open questions. Children access resources freely and may choose to move them around the classroom to extend their learning.

4.1 Planning

Staff plan activities and experiences for children that enable children to develop and learn effectively. In order to do this, staff working with the youngest children are expected to focus strongly on the 3 prime areas as these underpin and support the specific areas.

Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests, and stage of development of each child in their care, and use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience. Where a child may have a special educational need or disability, staff consider whether specialist support is required, linking with relevant services from other agencies, where appropriate.

In planning and guiding children's activities, staff reflect on the different ways that children learn and include these in their practice.

Staff use the Hazel Oak learning intensions to plan and reflect on learning. Our ranges originate from Birth – 5 years, along with elements of the old P Level statements. Staff also use children's EHCP targets and multi-agency targets to support their planning and preparation.

4.2 Teaching

Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play, and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction.

We have a total communication approach in our EYFS classes to support our children's communication and language. We use visual timetables, objects of reference, photographs,

symbols, aided language displays, core boards, symbol exchange, Makaton signing, as well as verbal communication.

We also use Attention Autism strategies to support all our learners to attend to activities and participate with support and independently. Children are given varied opportunities of 1-1 and small group activities. Some children begin to access a structured workstation approach, which is then continued into Key Stage 2. We also have our continuous provision enhanced to match the theme/ individual approaches to encourage extended play and support children with the prime areas of the EYFS framework.

5. Assessment

At Hazel Oak School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations shared by parents and/or carers.

We use the Hazel Oak assessment framework on Solar (Trackable). Our learning journals are captured and shared with parents using Tapestry or folders. Next steps of learning are recorded underneath observations.

Within the first 6 weeks that a child **starts reception**, staff will administer the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

At the **end of the EYFS**, staff complete the EYFS profile for each child. Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals, indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, and discussions with parents and/or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child.

The profile is moderated internally (referring to Development Matters guidelines) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Schools may find that some pupils are unable to access the assessment even with necessary adaptations. If this is the case, schools must record those pupils as 'unable to access' within the 'Assessment service: manage your school's assessments' (see 'Pupils who are unable to access the assessment' in [Assessment participation](#)). This includes schools where all pupils are unable to access the assessment.

6. Working with parents and carers

We recognise that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

Parents and/or carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through our Tapestry online tool, as well as home school diaries and verbal communication. The progress check and EYFS profile helps to provide parents and/or carers with a well-rounded picture of their child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. We also have ongoing conversations about children's development with multi-agencies surrounding the child and opportunities through their EHCP reviews and target setting.

We have two sessions where we invite parents into school, one in Autumn term and one in Summer term. In the first, we discuss how the children have settled and the final parents evening we evaluate and reflect on the children's progress throughout the year.

Each child is assigned a key person, this is often the class teacher, who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate. We also have a family support worker in school who can provide support and guidance to parents and carers.

7. Safeguarding and welfare procedures

We promote good oral health and overall wellbeing through daily routines, discussions, and visual support. Children learn about healthy eating, reducing sugary snacks and drinks, and the importance of brushing teeth. Staff model healthy habits and provide adapted teaching using sensory and visual methods. We follow Public Health England's evidence-based guidance on oral hygiene and supervised toothbrushing, ensuring safe, inclusive practice suited to our pupils' individual needs.

- The effects of eating too many sweet things
- The importance of brushing your teeth

We follow [Public Health England guidance on supervised toothbrushing](#) to make sure that it is evidence-based and safe. However, we haven't yet physically introduced tooth brushing in school but we are following guidelines to support appropriate teaching of tooth brushing. We also take advice from the DFE on nutrition from:

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/nutrition>

Hazel Oak School is committed to Safeguarding. All staff are employed through Safer Recruitment procedures and receive regular training in Child Protection and Safeguarding. We follow the guidance outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (September 2025) and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (December 2023).

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68add931969253904d155860/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_from_1_September_2025.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6849a7b67cba25f610c7db3f/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

The rest of our safeguarding and welfare procedures are outlined in our safeguarding policy and procedures can be found on the school website.

The new EYFS Frame 2025 states the importance of safer eating. When children are eating there must be at least 1 PFA trained staff member in the room at all times. Staff must share information on allergies/ dietary needs with all staff before a child can start. This must be shared with catering team.

The class teacher is responsible for checking that food being provided meets requirements for each child. Providers must prepare food to prevent choking ie foods cut (especially grapes in 1/2).

Children must always be in sight and hearing of staff when eating. Staff should be aware of silent choking and be alert.

Where possible, providers should sit facing children whilst eating to prevent choking, prevent food sharing and unexpected allergic reactions. Choking incidents must be recorded (where and how) and parent/ carers notified. Records should then be reviewed if any trends occur.

Staff working within EYFS must have a PFA to be included in ratio numbers.

Staff must refer to Hazel Oak's intimate care policy to support pupils' privacy during personal care.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/68c024cb8c6d992f23edd79c/Early_years_foundation_stage_statutory_framework_-_for_group_and_school-based_providers.pdf.pdf

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the EYFS Lead and the Governing Board, or sooner if statutory EYFS or safeguarding guidance changes. The EYFS Lead monitors implementation each term and reports on compliance, curriculum delivery, and safeguarding to the Governing Board annually.

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

Appendix 1. List of statutory policies and procedures for the EYFS

Statutory policy or procedure for the EYFS	Where can it be found?
Safeguarding policy and procedures	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for responding to illness	See health and safety policy
Administering medicines policy	See supporting pupils with medical conditions policy
Emergency evacuation procedure	See health and safety policy
Procedure for checking the identity of visitors	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedures for a parent failing to collect a child and for missing children	See child protection and safeguarding policy
Procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints	See complaints policy
Privacy with intermate care	Intermit care policy

In accordance with Section 3 of the Statutory EYFS Framework (2025), Hazel Oak School ensures that:

- All EYFS staff have enhanced DBS clearance and are assessed for ongoing suitability.
- Two emergency contacts are recorded for every child.
- Unexplained absences are monitored daily and followed up in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Staff-to-child ratios meet or exceed statutory EYFS requirements.
- All EYFS practitioners hold or are working towards full Paediatric First Aid certification.
- Children's personal care and toileting are managed sensitively to uphold dignity and privacy.
- Whistleblowing and safer recruitment policies are followed in all staffing matters.
- Nutrition guidance is embedded across the EYFS, promoting healthy choices in meals and snacks.