The Early Years Foundation Stage

In our Early Years, we have morning and afternoon children in F1 (part timers), as well as some children who stay all day for the Government's 30 hours eligibility scheme. Including the 30 hours children, F1 has a maximum of 39 children between 3 key groups (The AM Owls, PM Owls and The Hedgehogs).

In F2, there is a maximum of 60 children between two classes, The Moles and The Rabbits.

Our Intent

At Walter Halls, the Early Years team firmly believes that the Early Years Foundation Stage is vital in securing solid foundations for all of our children, so that they can build upon them throughout their learning journey. It is our intent that the children who enter our EYFS develop physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst embedding a positive attitude to school and develop good learning behaviours. We recognise and value the importance of the Characteristics of Learning: playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically and how these characteristics support the children's desire and ability to engage, be motivated and to think. We also place high priority on the development of our children's Communication and Language skills, as we understand how vital these skills are to becoming successful learners.

From the moment the children start in The Early Years Foundation Stage at Walter Halls, we work in close partnership with parents, carers and families to encourage independent, happy learners who thrive in school. We believe that the diversity of our learners must be recognised within all our teaching content, and that this content needs to recognise children's life experiences and their differing needs.

We believe that all children deserve to be valued as individuals and we are passionate in allowing all children to achieve their full, unique potential from their varied starting points. We aim to prepare our children to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of F2 and our aim is that all children make accelerated progress from their individual starting points.

Our ultimate goal is to instil in our children a love of learning, curiosity, knowledge and skills needed for the next stage of their learning journey. We value the development of their communication and language skills, social skills and learning behaviour, as much as their mathematical and literary knowledge to optimise their chance for progress and so we can ensure their future success.

Implementation – How do we put our intent into action?

- **We consider children's starting points at the beginning of the year, and reassess it throughout the year, by looking at the individual needs of our children and their progress.** Considering their different starting points, we then carefully develop our EYFS Curriculum, which enables them to follow the path of their learning journey that is suitable for their unique needs, stage of development and interests.
- **We create interesting invitations to play, learn and explore in both our inside and outside environments.** Both our indoor and outdoor provision is carefully planned and demonstrates a thorough knowledge and understanding of the way in which our children learn. We recognize the value of play-based pedagogy with a balance of child-led and adult -led learning, and support children to play an active role in their learning.

- **The EYFS curriculum is designed to engage all of the children by focusing on themes based on their common interests and the world around them**. This helps us to ensure that all children make good progress from their starting points. The F1 team have created a two-year cycle of themes, which stretch across all areas of learning and ensure that those children who are with them for more than 3 terms have a broad and balanced curriculum. The F2 team have some core themes, such as “Woodlands”, which helps embed the rules and expectations of using the Woods in our grounds; other themes are chosen based on children’s interests and some “mini” themes emerge through the Continuous Provision through in the moment planning.
- **Communication, language and literacy are at the heart of these themes** and planning begins with high quality texts to engage our young learners. The children will learn new skills, acquire new knowledge and demonstrate understanding through all areas of the EYFS curriculum and through explicit teaching of our school rules and values.
- **Planning for our curriculum is designed to be flexible so that a child’s unique interests are supported. We recognise the use of clear, focussed learning intentions as a tool in gaining intended learning outcomes**. The thematic, objective led planning is underpinned by the systematic teaching of good behaviour for learning, creating firm foundations for learning.
- **Additionally, throughout our learning environment practitioners provide effective and timely adult interactions** to ensure that learning can be quickly captured and enhanced. These “in the moment” observations and instant engagements support next step planning in daily staff discussions and in our weekly planning meeting.
- **Throughout EYFS, our children experience a balance of adult led and adult initiated activities** throughout the week. By the time children are in Reception, maths and phonics are taught as carpet sessions on a daily basis on alongside other curriculum areas. Children in both F1 and F2 take part in adult led focus sessions throughout the week, which provide a balance across all curriculum areas.
- **All learning is viewed as invaluable and is celebrated. Strong emphasis is placed on the children’s independent learning in the indoor and outdoor learning environments.**
- **Through our school values we aim to support children to become good learners and citizens**; we use the “Characteristics of Effective Learning” alongside Development Matters, Birth to 5 and the children’s next steps to inform planning.

When we plan for both adult-led and the continuous provision environment we consider the following:

Playing and exploring – engagement
- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to have a go

Active learning – motivation
- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking
- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing to do things

All areas of the provision are continually enhanced to support this exploration and consolidation of learning.

- **Parents are valued as first educators and every effort is made to inform them of the EYFS curriculum, whilst providing them with the tools to continue learning at home**. Strategies to include and inform parents include the use of Class Dojo, Instagram, Feedback Friday in F1, Stay and Play, Word of the Week and Reading for pleasure events in F2 as well as daily informal conversations with members of the team. We work together to create firm foundations for future learning for all of our children.

Impact – how do we know what pupils have learnt and how well they have learnt it?

Our curriculum throughout the EYFS is planned to meet the needs of all of our children, including our disadvantaged pupils, EAL and those with SEND. To achieve this, the whole team spends time looking at and evaluating how children are learning and discussing their next steps.

Methodology:

- **We talk to children, look at their work, observe their learning experiences and analyse data and progress by year group, class, groups and individuals.** Every member of staff uses ongoing observational assessment to identify children's starting points and plan experiences which ensure progress throughout planned teaching sessions and the indoor and outdoor environments. This information is tracked using Arbor and Pupil Progress tracking grids.
- **We use this information on a weekly basis to plan learning experiences and next steps so that knowledge and skills are built cumulatively.** Throughout each term, and ongoing throughout the year, Early Years practitioners assess children's progress and input the data onto Arbor, there is also a significant amount of data analysis to ensure children who require extra support are identified and have their next steps supported.
- **Evidence of children's learning** including observations, work samples, photographs and contributions from parents are kept in paper learning journals, which children use to reflect on their progress through pupil voice.
- **We use "Floor books" to show the children's group experiences and learning**; these will be used in a flexible way, sometimes to show a theme week or topic, other times to reflect their learning and allow them to look back, discuss and share past learning.

Assessment & Measuring progress:

Our curriculum and its delivery ensure that children make good progress. Children in our early years, on average, arrive with much lower starting points than nationally.

- **During their time in our EYFS, most children make rapid progress. We measure progress and children's learning across the year through formative and summative assessment** which are based on the teacher's knowledge of the child, their learning journeys, photographs and adult recording sheets. Almost all of our children make more than the expected steps progress from their starting points.
- **The judgements of our school are moderated with other schools**; judgements are deemed to be secure and consistent with Government guidelines. The Early Years provision features in the School Development Plan and has a rigorous plan for development each year. This is monitored and evaluated by the EYFS Leads and the Head teacher.
- **The impact of the EYFS curriculum is reflected in having well rounded, happy and confident children transitioning into Year 1 who are keen learners**. We believe our high standards are due to the enriched play-based exploration alongside the rigour of assessment and teaching the children have as they move through the early years – a rich diet of balanced learning experiences is undoubtedly the best way to develop happy, curious children.

- **Assessment in EYFS is regularly reviewed to ensure it is effective in highlighting children's next steps** and used to plan small group and intervention work. To support our children with specific SEND we have individual target and assessment folders so we can track their individual steps.
- **Tracking judgements in F1 and F2 will be made using a best fit approach**, using practitioner knowledge and recorded evidence.
- **Pupil Progress meetings** - Both F1 and F2 will use Pupil Progress grids to highlight children who are working below (BLW), working towards (WTS) and expected (EXS)and will provide details about planned next steps and support for individuals/groups of children every term.

EYFS Assessment and Parent Meeting Schedule

	September starter – 3 terms in F1	**January starter – 5 terms in F1**	**F2**
Autumn	Arbor baseline 6 weeks in (Oct)		
Spring	Parent Meeting (Jan)	Arbor baseline 6 weeks in (Feb/March)	
Summer	Parent Meeting (June) Arbor (June)	Parent Meeting (May) Arbor (July)	
Autumn			Gov Baseline 6 weeks in (Oct) Arbor Baseline (Oct) Parent Meeting – (Nov) Arbor (Dec)
Spring		Parent Meeting (Jan)	Parent Meeting – (Feb) Arbor (March)
Summer		Parent Meeting (June) Arbor (June)	Reports (June) Arbor (June Final Data Drop for LA (June)
Assessment points	Oct, June	Feb, July, June	Oct, March, June

In EYFS children's progress is tracked and entered on Arbor using the agreed Nottingham Schools Trust

F2

Data drop	F2 Autumn baseline/target					
End F1 old code	N2EXS/GD/ RBLW	N2WTS	N2 BLW	N1	E2	E1, E0
Arbor code	EXS	WTS	BLW 1	BLW 2	BLW 3	PKS

F1 – N2

Data drop	N2 Autumn baseline/target					
Start N2 old code	N1EXS/GD/	N1WTS	N1 BLW	E2	E1	E0
Arbor code	EXS	WTS	BLW 1	BLW 2	BLW 3	PKS

F1- N1

Data drop	Start of N1 – January starters. Baselined February/March					
Start N1 old code	E2 EXS/GD/	E2 WTS	E2 BLW	E1	E0	
Arbor code	EXS	WTS	BLW 1	BLW 2	BLW 3	

BLW- working below an expected level, will be receiving additional support which may be part of our school's universal provision offer.
WTS – working towards being at the expected level for that point of the year
EXS – working at the expected level for that point of the year
GD – working strongly at the expected level with some greater understanding (an extension of expected with more examples and really secure at the expected level)

This policy is reviewed annually as part of regular school improvement cycles