



Harden Primary School

Early Years Policy

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	Print name	Signature		Date
Headteacher	Leanne Ruddock			15 th July 2026
On behalf of Governing Body	Jenni Mayo	J Mayo		15 th July 2026

At Harden Primary School, we encourage children to immerse themselves in learning opportunities that inspire them. We are passionate about nurturing children's aspiration, independence, determination, creativity and collaboration. We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for children to take risks in their learning.

Harden learners are empowered to take control of their learning, equipping them for success.

Aims of the Early Years

We believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start to their school life, both emotionally and intellectually.

For them to develop their full potential, we aim to:

- Recognise all pupils as unique and special.
- Understand that pupils develop in different ways at different times.
- Provide a safe, secure and caring environment where pupils feel happy and valued.
- Foster and nurture self-confidence and self-esteem by developing an awareness of their own identity and role in the community.
- Teach them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encourage independence, decision-making and learning through mistakes.
- Develop social skills, values and codes of behaviour to work together harmoniously.
- Support pupils to develop care, respect and appreciation of beliefs, cultures and opinions that are different to their own.
- Understand the importance of play.
- Provide learning experiences that reflect pupil's personal interest and curiosity to develop their natural desire, interest and excitement in order to motivate them to learn
- Provide experiences that build on previous knowledge in order to challenge, stimulate and extend learning
- Provide effective learning opportunities in a range of high quality environments with quality first teaching

Early Years Curriculum

Our early years setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework that applies from September 2021. The EYFS framework includes 7 areas of learning and development that are equally important and interconnected. However, 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.

At Harden Primary School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observation we assess the children's

interests, stages of development and learning needs, before planning challenging, achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning.

Every child will be learning skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through the 7 **areas of learning and development**.

The prime areas are:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through 4 specific areas:

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

These 7 areas are used to plan each child's learning and activities. We provide children with opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. Teaching and Learning will take place within the classroom and outside area. Within these areas children will participate in a variety of activities, both with an adult and independently.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. Staff plan and highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them.

The three characteristics are;

- Playing and Exploring – 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.

Active Learning through Play

Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world around them. They practise and build up ideas learning how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside others as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. We deliver opportunities for exploration of all 7 areas of learning through purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led, adult-initiated and child-initiated activities.

Role of the Key Person

Each child is assigned to the class teacher as their key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs. This helps the child become familiar with the setting and offers a strong relationship for both the child and their parents/carers. Alongside the class teacher, the children also have the support of Early Years Practitioners who work alongside the teacher in their role as key person.

Practitioners at Harden Primary;

- Keep children safe
- Understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, plan for next steps
- Identify any need for additional support
- Support children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture
- Value and respect all children and families equally

Practitioners at our school teach children by;

- Ensuring there are challenging and playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development
- Fostering the characteristics of effective early learning
- Providing quality high quality interaction and engagement
- Planning and guiding children's activities through a variety of child initiated, adult initiated and adult directed activities
- Reflecting on the different ways that children learn

Enabling Environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs.

Enabling Environments;

- Value all people
 - Value learning
- They offer;
- Stimulating resources, relevant to all the children's cultures and communities
 - Rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
 - Support for children to take risks and explore

Parents as Partners

At our school we aim to establish good relationships with all parents and carers based on mutual respect and concern for the child. We value parents and carers as the child's first

educator and as active partners in the continuing process of education. When parents and practitioners work together in Early Years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning.

Parental partnership starts with a 1-1 meeting with their class teacher where we can find out about children's pre-school experiences and share knowledge about the child. These provide the opportunity for staff to gain a whole picture of the child and for the child to be introduced to staff in the secure, familiar environment of their own home. This is an opportunity for parents to get to know the staff and ask any questions they may have.

All parents and children are invited to visit the setting a number of times before the term starts. This allows both parent and child to familiarise themselves with the rules and routines of the setting. During the first week of the new academic year (or on entry to the setting throughout the year), parents are asked to attend information meetings to enable them to assist their child in school and at home. Parent meetings are held termly, in line with school policy. During these meetings the child's progress and next steps are discussed. Parents are invited to workshops, celebration events, assemblies and learning events throughout the year and are encouraged to make private appointments to discuss any concerns should they arise.

Equal Opportunities

At our school we are committed to anti discriminatory practice for all children and families. We respect and value the diversity which exists in our wider community. We are committed to challenging attitudes that promote discrimination, ensuring respect for all and preparing all children for life in a diverse society. *See whole school Equal Opportunities policy*

SEND

All children are entitled to an education that enables them to:

- Achieve the best possible educational outcomes, and
- Become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education

At our school we have clear systems and processes in place to identify and respond to SEND. Early identification of need is important in order to develop effective provision to ensure children with SEND get the support they need to improve long term outcomes. We are also committed to working closely with parents, carers and other agencies to ensure children's needs are met and best outcomes are achieved. *See whole school SEND and Inclusion policy*

Teaching

At Harden Primary School, we will provide quality first teaching to all pupils.

Planning

All areas of Learning and Development are planned for and available to access within the setting, both indoors and outdoors. The learning opportunities provided include a range of child initiated and adult focussed activities to enhance learning.

Planning is based on observations of the child's learning and their next steps. It aims to provide individual teaching and learning to identify and address any gaps in the child's learning and development.

All observation, planning and assessment ensure children are working toward the Early Learning Goals that should be achieved by the end of the Reception year.

Assessment

At Harden Primary ongoing assessment is an integral part of the 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 consider observations that might be shared by parents and/or carers. Within the first 6 weeks that a child starts reception, staff will administer the Statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA, May 2021).

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 the Development Matters guidance) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements. EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority.

Observations then take place daily and include significant moments of a pupil's learning. These are then evaluated and used to identify next steps and fed back through regular progress and assessment meetings.

Some of the children's learning/ next steps/ wow moments are recorded on the Marvellous Me program by all practitioners in the setting. This builds shares information about a child's developmental age and stage when working toward the Early Learning Goals in the Early Years Outcomes document. It also shares information with parents.

All observation and assessment are rigorously monitored both internally and externally by members of the senior leadership team, the local authority, the EXCEED cluster group of schools and specialised consultants where necessary.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children. At Harden Primary School we plan carefully to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible for each child and supports them settling quickly and happily. This process can be tailored to the specific needs of every child.

Safeguarding

Safety is paramount and Harden Primary School has a robust and effective Safeguarding Policy to ensure the children in our care are protected. *See whole school Safeguarding Procedures and Child Protection policy*

Safety and security is a high priority at our school and it is important that all children in our care are safe. Our requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014 are as follows:

- To promote the safety and welfare of the children in our care.
- To promote good health and prevent the spread of infection by taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- To manage the behaviour of the children in our care in a way that is appropriate for their individual needs and stage of development.
- To ensure that adults who have access to children, or who look after children are suitably vetted and trained.
- To ensure that the setting is fit for purpose and that furniture and equipment is safe.
- To maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting.
- To prevent risks to children through detailed risk assessments for all environments the children use (including educational visits) and individual children with specific needs.

Ratios

Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Providers must ensure that children are adequately supervised and decide how to deploy staff to ensure children's needs are met. Providers must inform parents and/or carers about staff deployment, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions. Children must usually be within sight and hearing of staff and always within sight or hearing.

Only those aged 17 or over may be included in ratios (and staff under 17 should be always supervised). Students on long term placements and volunteers (aged 17 or over) and staff working as apprentices in early education (aged 16 or over) may be included in the ratios if the provider is satisfied that they are competent and responsible.

Reception classes in maintained schools and academies are subject to infant class size legislation. The School Admissions (Infant Class Size) Regulations 2012 limit the size of infant classes to 30 pupils per school teacher while an ordinary teaching session is conducted. 'School teachers' do not include teaching assistants, higher level teaching assistants or other support staff. Consequently, in an ordinary teaching session, a school must employ sufficient school teachers to enable it to teach its infant classes in groups of no more than 30 per school teacher.

Outings

Children must be kept safe while on outings. Providers must assess the risks or hazards which may arise for the children and must identify the steps to be taken to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards. The assessment must include consideration of adult to child ratios. A full risk assessment is completed in line with school policy. *See Educational Visits Policy.*

Staff Qualifications

The daily experience of children in early years settings and the overall quality of provision depends on all practitioners having appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. We ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training includes information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, the equality policy, and health and safety issues. We support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.

Appropriate arrangements are in place for the supervision/appraisal of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision/appraisal provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision/appraisal should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

Supervision/appraisal should provide opportunities for staff to;

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness

At least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate is on the premises and available at all times when children are present, and accompany children on outings.

The number of children, staff and layout of premises are taken into account to ensure that a paediatric first aider is able to respond to emergencies quickly.

We ensure that staff have sufficient understanding and use of English to ensure the well-being of children in their care. For example, staff are in a position to keep records in English, to liaise with other agencies in English, to summon emergency help, and to understand instructions such as those for the safety of medicines or food hygiene.

Positive Relationships

At Harden Primary School we are firmly dedicated towards promoting positive behaviour in all children, ensuring they are respected and valued as individuals. We believe that setting boundaries for behaviour is important for the safety and protection of children, service users and our environment. *See whole school Positive Relationships Policy.*

Food Hygiene

All snack provided is healthy, balanced and nutritious.

Fresh water is always available, and children can access the snack area throughout the session. We record any dietary needs and display these in the appropriate areas. Children are supervised and encouraged to be independent in eating and drinking.

Safety of Premises

At Harden Primary School we ensure our premises, including overall floor space and outdoor spaces, are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for and the activities provided on the premises. We comply with requirements of health and safety legislation (including fire safety and hygiene requirements).

We take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or any other emergency and have an emergency evacuation procedure. We have appropriate fire detection and control equipment (for example, fire alarms, smoke detectors, fire blankets and/or fire extinguishers) which are in working order and checked regularly. Fire exits are clearly identifiable, and fire doors are free of obstruction and easily opened from the inside.

Smoking

We do not allow smoking in or on the premises when children are present or about to be present.