



Timothy Hackworth Primary School

'Respectful and resilient; being the best that we can be.'

Early Years Policy

CRC Article 28: All children have the right to a good quality education.



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| Date policy approved/adopted: | February 2026 |
| Next review date: | February 2027 |
| Approved by: | Governing Body |
| Head Teacher signature: | <i>L. Boulton</i> |
| Governor signature: | <i>P. Crook</i> |

Early Years Policy

CRC Article 28: All children have the right to a good quality education.

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| Date of Policy: | February 2026 |
| Review Date: | February 2027 |
| Early Years Lead: | Mrs. Adele Condron |
| Governors for Early Years: | Mrs. Karen Wilson |

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Respectful Relationships Policy. All policy and practice in Timothy Hackworth Primary School respects children's dignity.

Our Timothy Hackworth School Vision

May our Rights Respecting School be a happy place for us all to learn; where every one of us is valued and safe in our Timothy Hackworth School Family. May we all be the best that we can be by making a positive difference to each other, our community in Shildon and the wider world in which we all live.

Mission Statement (written by children):

We would like our school, which reflects British Values, to be at the heart of the community, sharing, supporting, and learning together with everyone as equals. Our children have the right to high quality learning experiences to help them to be the best that they can be.

We encourage our children to be creative, unique, open-minded, and independent individuals, respectful of themselves and of others in our school, our local community and the wider world.

We aim to nurture our children on their journey through life so that they can grow into safe, caring, democratic, responsible, and tolerant adults who make a positive difference to British Society and to the world.

Values

Ours is a happy school with high hopes and ambitions for all our children and we welcome working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that everything is done in the best interests of the children at all times.

All of our staff take their responsibility towards the children seriously and they strive to help each child reach their full potential as global citizens physically, emotionally, socially and academically. We are fully committed to the [CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD \(CRC\)](#).

To us, every child is unique and precious, and we endeavour to foster a high level of motivation towards learning and behaviour. We are committed to the basic skills of English and Maths.

At all times, we aim to centre the teaching in an atmosphere of mutual respect and personal respect. A high-quality education is [the right of every child](#), and at Timothy Hackworth Primary School, we embrace that responsibility and strive to achieve it for all our pupils.

Equalities Information

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's 'Equalities Policy Statement', 'Equalities Objectives Summary' and 'Equalities Information and Objectives'.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in respect to age (as appropriate), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (LGBTQ+).

Rationale

At Timothy Hackworth Primary School, we aim to inspire all children to reach their full potential, physically, academically, socially and emotionally. School policy is derived from the school's Mission Statement, Vision and the shared values that underpin teaching at Timothy Hackworth Primary School. Our Early Years Curriculum is child-centred and is founded on certain beliefs, which reflect the whole curriculum:

- children need to form strong, warm and supportive relationships, and learn to understand their own feelings and those of others;
- children learn best from first-hand experience;
- children have individual needs and talents;

- children’s independence should be fostered;
- children need to acquire basic skills;
- children need a secure and safe environment where they feel valued and confident.

“No job is more important than working with children in the early years.” *Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2023*

We believe that every child deserves the best possible start in life. We aim to make a significant contribution to that start by helping our young children develop a love for learning which will continue throughout their education and life. We strive to ensure that their first experience of school develops a positive attitude towards education, the ability to form healthy and safe relationships, and to provide a foundation for lifelong learning.

Children at this crucial stage are entitled to provision which supports and extends their knowledge, understanding, skills and confidence. Experiences in the Early Years should build on what children already know and can do. We recognise that children bring a vast range of different experiences, interests, competencies, and knowledge to their early learning which defines their “starting points”.

Intent

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception year. Timothy Hackworth Primary School’s Foundation Stage accommodates children from the age of 2. We have a 52 place Nursery, two Reception classes and a 20 place 2-year-old provision.

We aim:

- to give each child a happy and positive start to their school life in which they can create and nurture their love of learning, develop an enthusiasm for knowledge, and a self-confidence in their ability to be resilient and successful learners;
- to offer a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum, coherently planned and sequenced to build on what children know and can do, providing them with the knowledge and skills they require to prepare them for their next stage in their education;
- to enrich children’s experiences by offering new and exciting opportunities, to experience awe and wonder, and to enhance their play and learning with a variety of resources, visits, and interactions with people from their community and beyond;

- to give children the foundations for future learning by developing and expanding their communication and language skills, in particular, their acquisition of vocabulary and a secure knowledge of phonics;
- to enable each child to develop socially, physically, emotionally, intellectually, morally, culturally, and spiritually, to be the best that they can be;
- to encourage children to develop independence within a supportive and challenging environment;
- to support children in building relationships so they may develop a respect for themselves, others in school, the community, and the wider world;
- to work alongside parents and carers, supporting learning at home, to meet each child's individual needs to ensure that they reach their full potential.

Cultural Capital

At Timothy Hackworth Primary School, we endeavour to develop children's dispositions and attitudes about themselves, their community, and the wider world, to be good citizens who will make a positive difference. In the Early Years, we aim to broaden children's experiences and equip them with the cultural capital they deserve. We have a curriculum rich with everyday experiences, visits, and visitors. We want children to know their community, the people who help them, their history and their cultural heritage.

“When we succeed in giving every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.” *Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2023*

Implementation

The Early Years Foundation Stage at Timothy Hackworth Primary School follows the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (September 2025).

Four guiding principles should shape practice in early years' settings:

- every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments with teaching and support from adults**, who respond to their individual interests and needs and who help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers;
- the importance of **learning and development**. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in

early years' provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Three areas are particularly important for building a foundation for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, forming relationships, and thriving. These are the **prime areas**:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
- Communication and Language;
- Physical Development.

Four **specific areas**, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied, are:

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

Play

“The significance of play in allowing children to learn and develop across such a broad range of developmental areas has long been understood. Its fundamental value is recognised in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Play provides the natural, imaginative, and motivating context for children to learn about themselves, one another, and the world around them. A single moment of sustained play can afford children many developmental experiences at once...”

Teaching and Play in the Early Years – A Balancing Act? OFSTED 2015

At Timothy Hackworth Primary School, children in the Early Years are provided with a range of rich, meaningful, first-hand experiences, in which they can explore, think creatively and be active. We provide a well-balanced, progressive curriculum, and our planning ensures that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area of the EYFS. Each area of learning and development is implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated learning. Two-year-old provision has a greater focus upon the Prime Areas of learning as these are recognised as the fundamental areas of learning linked to child development.

We have a curriculum that is child-centred, based upon topics and themes, covering all areas of learning, to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum which actively engages the children. The curriculum is underpinned by quality texts which develop the children's love of reading and expands their vocabulary. We encourage active learning and closely observe children's levels of engagement to ensure that they remain interested and motivated to learn.

Children are assessed on entry, and continuously, through observation, interaction and conversation. Parents are kept up to date with their child's progress through our Class Dojo platform, parent consultations and 'Stay and Play' sessions in school. Areas of strength and next steps are identified and form the basis of each medium-term plan, incorporating all the areas of learning, as steps towards the Early Learning Goals.

In planning and guiding children's learning, staff are knowledgeable in the different ways that children learn and utilise a range of pedagogical approaches to best meet children's individual needs. Staff make regular observations to assess where children are in their learning journey, using Development Matters (September 2023), Birth to Five Matters (2021), and other child development materials, as a guide, and to ensure that planning, adult interactions, interventions, and the learning environment support children in consolidating their knowledge and skills and enabling them to move to the next step in their development and understanding.

Effective teaching and learning include, "Characteristics of Effective Learning". The Early Years team strive to ensure that these characteristics are interwoven throughout our practice:

- **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.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The Early Years Foundation Stage places great emphasis and importance upon children's emotional security and well-being. As a Gold Level Rights Respecting School, we teach pupils about the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each class develops its own Charter, selecting the Articles which they feel are relevant to their class. Children are grouped into Family Groups, who meet regularly each term, to

discuss each 'right' in depth, using UNICEF recommended resources. In the Early Years, we support the children in understanding that **all** children have:

- The right to learn (Article 28);
- The right to be the best that you can be (Article 29);
- The right to be safe (Article 19);
- The right to have a voice and have opinions listened to (Article 12);
- The right to play and relax (Article 31);
- The right to a healthy diet (Article 24);
- The right to a clean and tidy environment (Article 24).

Staff explicitly refer to specific rights at relevant moments, e.g., reminding children that they have the right to be safe when putting on safety helmets before riding their bikes.

We encourage and support:

- the development of emotional literacy through our "Zones of Regulation";
- the promotion of positive attitudes to learning and behaviour through our Class Dojo system;
- self-discipline, by encouraging children to make good choices and by rewarding these.

All children have regular opportunities to access planned Forest School activities which enhance their understanding of taking and managing risks, being physically active, taking care of their environment and experiencing the awe and wonder of the changing seasons.

We share healthy snacks daily, and learn about the importance of a healthy balanced lifestyle to maintain our emotional wellbeing and physical health. Children have continual access to drinking water, and are taught about good health, including oral health, through: developing positive relationships, keeping active, resting, sleeping well, regular teeth brushing, and making healthy food choices.

Reading

In the Two-Year Old Provision, weekly plans are based around stories. Children have frequent opportunities to sing songs and rhymes, listen to stories, play games to develop their phonological awareness and auditory skills, and share books with adults who skilfully model language to build the children's vocabulary.

In Nursery, topics are planned around books and stories. Children engage in a wide range of Phase 1 activities to develop their phonological awareness. Children participate in small group, adult-led sessions with a specific language focus, e.g., rhymes, syllables, and initial sounds. Children are exposed to a wide range of books, stories, rhymes, poems and songs. Adults share stories and books with children one-

to-one and in small groups to model new language and engage children in discussion around stories, print and illustrations. In the Summer Term, before the transition to Reception class, Nursery children take home wordless picture books, allowing them to read at home and practise skills such as turning pages, talking about pictures and using story language.

In Reception, children have daily, discrete phonic sessions, following the systematic, synthetic programme of Essential Letters and Sounds. These are planned progressively towards the Early Learning Goal of children being able to read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound blending, and simple sentences and books that are consistent with their phonic knowledge. Continuous assessment is robust, and interventions are timely, ensuring that children's progress is swift, sustained and embedded. Phonics sessions are systematic, discrete, interactive, engaging and multisensory. The sessions follow the "Revisit, Teach, Practise, Apply" method.

Children engage in frequent 1:1 and small group guided reading sessions to apply phonic knowledge and skills, knowledge of high frequency and common exception words, and to develop their comprehension skills. Home reading books are carefully matched to where the children's phonic knowledge is secure, to consolidate and embed skills, knowledge and improve fluency. In Guided Reading, books are matched to the phonic level that the children are currently working at.

All children across EYFS have daily story sessions where adults read and perform stories to engage and excite the children, introduce them to new vocabulary, and ignite their passion for language and literacy. Book areas are inviting and comfortable and incorporate resources to support story telling. All areas of EYFS provision display printed language to support the understanding of print having meaning, and in Reception, some labels, where appropriate, display sound buttons to support children to independently blend to read words.

Mathematics

In the Two-Year-Old Provision, children are taught their early maths skills throughout their daily routines and activities, e.g. singing counting songs and rhymes, exploring collections of natural materials, exploring shape through construction resources and puzzles, or experiencing patterns through actions, sounds, shapes and natural and recycled materials.

In Nursery, the teaching of Mathematics is delivered through adult-led focused activities, often linked to a book or rhyme, and through continuous provision. Everyday mathematics are prioritised by all through counting down the days of the week, marking birthdays on the class calendar, using five frames to show how many children are present, counting children in the line and counting out items for snack time. Staff continuously model mathematical language and rote counting skills.

In Reception, the teaching of Mathematics is delivered through daily adult-led discrete group sessions, focused activities linked to a book or story, and through the areas of continuous provision. Daily discrete sessions ensure children's needs are met. Continuous assessment is robust, ensuring that interventions are timely, and children's progress is swift, sustained, and embedded. Mathematical themes focus upon the deep understanding of numbers, the relationships between them and the patterns within them.

Everyday mathematics are prioritised by all through counting down the days of the week, marking birthdays on the class calendar, using ten frames to show how many children are present, counting children in the line and counting out items for snack time, registration and tidy up time. Staff continuously model mathematical language and discrete cardinal counting skills. Staff utilise as many 'real life' opportunities to teach mathematical skills and understanding as possible creating a mastery approach to learning.

We strive to create a high-quality learning environment where children can build on what they already know and can do, challenging them to move on to the next step in their learning and understanding. The Mathematics Area provides a range of resources and manipulatives to allow children to practise recognising, subitising, counting, ordering, and partitioning numbers, playing with shape and patterns and investigating mathematical problems. There are also opportunities to develop and apply mathematical skills in all areas of the provision, for example, using props to retell stories such as "The Three Little Pigs" in the Small World and Role-Play Areas, exploring shape and pattern in the Art and Design Area, naming and comparing shapes in Construction, and comparing measures with scales or measuring tapes in the Investigation Area.

Learning Environment

A vital aspect in the development of essential knowledge and skills is the learning environment. Continuous provision, indoors and outdoors, gives children opportunities to work independently, collaboratively with their friends, or with adults. Resources are carefully matched to the children's needs to ensure progression of skills. The learning environment is organised in a way to support children's independence and sense of responsibility. Adults observe children's interests and fascinations and utilise such child-initiated opportunities to embed knowledge, check understanding, develop skills and promote communication.

Our continuous provision enables children:

- to explore, use their senses, and be active learners;
- to continue the learning initiated by adults;
- to work and play independently, collaboratively with their peers, and be guided and supported by adults;
- to develop positive and respectful relationships with others;

- to develop essential skills and dispositions such as perseverance, problem-solving, creativity, innovation, enquiry, curiosity, and reflection;
- to develop a sense of responsibility and independence.

We believe that children learn by playing and exploring, being active and through creative and critical thinking, which we strive to support indoors and outside.

Inclusion

All children receive quality first teaching and activities are adapted accordingly. In addition to this, where children have been identified as having a specific need, intervention programmes will be implemented. Staff liaise closely with the school SENDCO (Special Education Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator), and relevant programmes of support are planned to ensure that children's needs are appropriately met. Early identification is key within the EYFS setting. Staff are trained to identify specific behaviours, needs or concerns around a child's development and learning and are competent in referring to appropriate services for support and advise on how to ensure inclusion for all children.

Parent Partnerships

We recognise that parents are the children's first and most enduring educators, and that children learn and develop well when there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers. All staff in Early Years aim to develop excellent relationships with parents and carers, interacting positively, respectfully, and taking the time to listen to them.

Each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that their learning and care is tailored to meet their needs. The key person supports parents and carers in guiding their child's development at home. The key person also helps families to engage with more specialist support, if appropriate.

Parents and carers are kept up to date with their child's progress and development through regular check-in's and parent and teacher consultations. The 2-Year-Old Progress Check and the EYFS Profile, at the end of Reception, help staff to provide parents and carers with a holistic picture of their child's knowledge, understanding, ability and achievement.

Parents are encouraged and invited to:

- talk to staff about their child before they start school;
- discuss any concerns with staff;
- attend regular progress meetings to discuss their child's achievements and next steps;
- communicate through reading diaries;

- communicate and share achievements through the Class Dojo system.

Information for parents is provided through meetings with parents, regular newsletters, text messages, and the school website.

Impact

We strive to ensure that all of our children make good progress across the Early Years from their diverse starting points, and that as many children as possible achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.

We aim to provide all children with the knowledge and skills, across all areas of learning, that they require to be ready for their next stage in education. We place particular emphasis upon children achieving the personal, social, emotional and physical skills that they require to succeed in Key Stage 1 and beyond.

We want children from Timothy Hackworth Primary School to demonstrate positive attitudes to learning through curiosity, enjoyment, concentration, resilience, managing their feelings and behaviour, and developing a strong sense of right and wrong.

The impact of our curriculum will be measured by how effectively it helps our pupils develop into well-rounded individuals, who embody our school values, and retain the knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them to become lifelong learners and valuable citizens.