

Early Years Pathway Curriculum Highfield Academy

How do we identify students for the Early Years pathway?

Early Years education is considered to be the essential foundation upon which all pupils build the rest of their lives and is an education that encompasses all learning. Students who are Nursery to KS1 age will automatically follow the Early Years Statutory Framework on entry to our school. Progress is tracked using the EQUALS skills maps and Evidence for Learning software.

Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments. Learning is broken down into small steps and presented in a cross-curricular manner rather than separate subjects to contextualise learning. Once students have reached the end of Key Stage 1 (or within this if they are able) they will progress onto one of the core 3 pathways blue, green or yellow, which will be decided using pupil progress information and knowledge of students learning styles and needs.

What are the core learning areas of the Early Years pathway?

The Early Years pathway encompasses the physical, social, emotional, aesthetic and intellectual development of the individual child, with no one area standing in isolation from the others. We use the Early Years Foundation Curriculum and EQUALS skills framework as a basis for our students learning. It encompasses the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum through to Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2 where students learn on different pathways. Staff are adept to the needs of the children and tailor the learning according to their needs and individual interests. The curriculum has 3 Prime learning areas: **Communication and Language, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development**. The framework encompasses these with the aim of developing independence in each area. **There are then 4 Specific learning areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design**. These are assessed within the Cognition and Learning Strand. Learning within the week is divided into 6 different thematic areas that account for each area of learning and encompass individual therapies and needs. Details of these are:

My Communication and Language – Communication (including PECS), Reading and Writing incorporating Communication and Language prime area

My Independence – Self-help, independent travel skills, self-care, staying safe, PSHE & Citizenship incorporating Personal, Social and Emotional Development

My Body (Physical Development) – Motor skills, Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Sport, Games, Swimming, Healthy Bodies incorporating Physical Development

My Thinking (Cognition and Learning) – Numeracy, ICT, Literacy incorporating Literacy and Mathematics; My World – Exploring the world, History, Geography, Citizenship, Science incorporating Understanding of the World; My Play - Art, Music, Dance, Drama, Arts Therapies, Music Therapies incorporating Expressive Arts and Design

In addition to the core curriculum skills there is a strong focus on children individual targets ensuring our curriculum pathways are responsive to each learner and builds on individual strengths and unique ways of learning.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning underpin all of the planning and teaching within the EYFS pathway. The pupil centred planning and themes reach out to relate to people and things through Playing and exploring, Active learning and Creating and thinking critically

How does it fit within whole school learning and the wider academy?

All students in Reception are automatically part of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This gives us lots of time to get to know students' individual needs and learning styles in order to choose the appropriate pathway they will move to. The EYFS pathway links to the **pre-formal** and **semi-formal** pathways by encompassing similar themed learning areas. The essential skills in communication and core subject areas also form a basis if students move on to the **formal** pathway. This ensures that the pathways are tailored to students' individual learning needs but also flexible enough that students can move across them as needed. Inclusive learning is promoted at all times and regular opportunities are planned for cross pathway learning including whole school curriculum days.

EYFS pathway long-term plan:

The curriculum is delivered through a topic-based approach with a rolling plan that engages students interests and makes learning irresistible. Topics are half termly which provide lots of creative scope but have the flexibility to extend if this is suited to the individual learners. Termly or half termly approach will be dependent on the classes individual needs some classes require lot of overlearning and repeated experiences (termly) whereas some students may need a faster pace to maintain engagement (half termly). The topics have been placed at specific times of the year to facilitate whole school creative curriculum days such as around the world and Highfield festival as well as opportunities to develop pathway learning across both schools. Other topics are more flexible and maybe adapted to promote and develop students' individual interests.

EYFS pathway medium and short term planning:

Medium-term planning is built around stimulating topics that provide inspiration for engaging cross-curricular learning activities that are underpinned by outcomes from the EQUALS skills maps framework as well as students' individual EHCP targets and interests. Sensory approaches are used to ensure activities are engaging and motivational, as well as creative curriculum days that bring learning to life. Students also have access to a range of interventions, therapies and teaching approaches such as Attention Autism, TEACCH, Rebound and swimming, which enable us to fully personalise learning and maximise progress. Learning opportunities are fortified in every moment of the day including lessons, playtimes, dinner, and trips out in the community including journey time.

Assessment on the EYFS pathway:

Teachers and teaching assistants assess learning through observations, photo evidence and collection of work. This is recorded through an electronic system Evidence for Learning, which enables us to simultaneously assess curriculum outcomes and individual EHCP targets. We can track the smallest steps of progress using the EQUALS skills maps framework and then use a formative assessment cycle to plan the next steps. For our summative assessment process, each strand is measured according to developing levels of independence on the independence scale.

LEVELS OF INDEPENDENCE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I need to be guided or fully supported both physically and verbally throughout the activity		My need for full physical support is less. It helps if an adult guides me during the activity		I can have a go at elements of the activity but still need some prompts		I am becoming independent but some guidance would help me to complete the activity		I can achieve the activity without the need for any support	

This information then feeds into regular pupil progress meetings between teachers and senior leaders each half term where we use a RAG system to show students' progress for curriculum and individual targets. This process allows us to identify what is going well and highlight areas where extra support may be needed providing early interventions. This cycle of planning, teaching and assessment ensures we have a detailed insight to student's progress and a clear vision of their individual learning needs that results in students who are motivated, inquisitive and active participants in their learning journeys.

Preparing Students on the EYFS Pathway for Adulthood

Adulthood is a time of significant change for young people especially when they have disabilities. There are many decisions and choices for a young people, their families and carers to make about the future related to daily life. We recognise this and believe that through our curriculum we are able to prepare students for this transition whatever age or ability. The SEND Code of Practice says: The purpose of an EHC plan is to make special educational provision to meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood. At Highfield Academies we believe that this preparation begins right from when the individual joins our school. Students remain in the EYFS until the end of KS1 where the information gathered about their progress and learning needs determines which pathway they move into. Having so much time in the EYFS enables us to deeply assess and understand student's needs and learning styles, which in turn enables us to choose the most appropriate pathway to maximise progress throughout school and into adult life. Levels of independence are nurtured and developed as a basis for development into adulthood.

Why are Life Skills so important?

Developing independence and confidence are key areas in many of our child's needs. Highfield have a highly individualised approach to ensure that personal requirements are addressed.

Life skills are taught both within the safe school environment, and most importantly on offsite visits present the opportunity for students to experience first-hand accessing community facilities and interacting with the general public. Learning is embedded within My Thinking, My Independence, My Communication and Language, My Body and Wellbeing (Physical Development).

Independent living skills (life skills) are an essential part of personal development; ensuring pupils feel confident in their communities and enhance self-esteem. Pupils' progress in this essential area is monitored closely through our Evidence for Learning software. We recognise for students on the EYFS Pathway that their development is not linear so experiences and encounters can occur in any order but progress noted against these.

Key Areas:

Independent Living – Travel training, making own food, handling and managing money, understanding and managing time, shopping, safety

Community – Friendships and relationships, volunteering, community resources & projects

Employment – Exploring career options, work experience, vocational options, transition to new settings (college visits), apprenticeships, supported internships and traineeships, CV Writing, Interview techniques

Between the Early Years and to the end of Key Stage 3 experiences and encounters are embedded within our curriculum provision. This is evident in different ways such as setting the table ready for lunch, preparing food, accessing the shops etc. As learners reach Key Stage 4 many of the areas are taught discretely within ASDAN Units to develop personal independence.

Learning intent:

What do we want our students to achieve?

Curriculum aims:

- Successful learners who enjoy learning and celebrating their achievements.
- Happy individuals, who are able to communicate their feelings and needs, interact with others and build positive relationships.
- Independent learners who are able to problem solve and follow basic care and safety routines

Areas of learning:

Prime Areas: Communication & Language, Physical Development & Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 Specific Areas: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design

Curriculum areas:

My Communication: (communication inc. PECS), Literacy **My World:** History, Geography, Citizenship, Science, **My Independence:** Self-care, independence, road safety, personal care **My Play:** Art, Music, Dance, Drama, Music and Art therapies, **My Body and Wellbeing:** Motor skills, physio, OT, Sport, Games, Healthy Bodies **My Thinking:** Maths, ICT, Literacy, Cognition and Learning. Learning outcomes come from the pupils' next steps & EQUALS skills maps.

Knowledge / skills implementation:

How do we organise learning?

Student's individual long term and short-term outcomes provided by EHCP

Termly/half termly topics. Linked to whole key stage topics and whole academy activities to contextualise learning and provide life skills learning

Highly motivating and engaging activities that make learning irresistible. Activities are linked to topics and books and use a wide range of multi sensory approaches.

Continuous Provision activities and opportunities for Outdoor Learning embedded. A mix of whole class activities, small group and 1:1 work.

Interventions & Teaching Approaches: Intensive interaction Attention Autism, SALT, Lego therapy, TEACCH Rebound, Tac pac

Creative curriculum days across the whole school to promote cross pathway learning and links to real life learning.

Life Skills and Preparing for Adulthood
Following instructions, adapting to new environments, real world and role play, My Thinking, My Communication, Visitors related to careers and access to role models, making choices, My Independence, making choices, residential trips, shops and community visits, travel, making own food, friendships, exploring the local area, managing change

Measuring impact:

How do we evidence progress?

Classroom observations, photos and collection of work

Recording observations on Evidence for Learning linking to the EQUALS skills maps and individual EHCP outcomes

Recording engagement with the Characteristics of Effective Learning

Termly pupil progress meetings with teachers and SLT recording progress with RAG rating

Evidencing progress during annual review process with a 6 month update

SMLT learner on the Page exercise.