

# Halfway Nursery Infant School



## Curriculum Policy

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# **HALFWAY NURSERY INFANT SCHOOL**

## **Curriculum Policy**

### **Introduction**

Halfway Nursery Infant School is a unique place. It has an individual identity that combines traditional values with modern and vibrant vision. Its traditional Victorian building, with beautiful grounds, evoke feelings of solidity and calm whilst housing a forward thinking and dynamic learning community.

At our school we are totally committed to the development of children, to offer them the best start to their formal education: an education that is rich in opportunities and experiences; one that influences a lifelong love of learning.

### **Vision and Aims**

At the heart of all we do are our children. We would like them to enjoy their childhood and be valued for their individuality, culture and heritage. We would like our children to go into the wider world as well rounded, happy, healthy and responsible citizens who care for the world and all the people who live in it. We strive for every child to be aspirational and forward thinking in all they do, and remain life long learners who are reflective, resilient and adaptable to the challenges of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

As a school community we will strive to:

**Care** for the children we teach, challenge them to achieve their goals and celebrate all their efforts and achievements.

**Harness** an atmosphere of harmony, happiness and friendship throughout school.

**Inspire** children through an innovative and creative curriculum which encompasses outstanding teaching.

**Learn** together and work as a team.

**Develop** high self esteem and high expectations within every child.

**Respect** the values and beliefs of every member of our learning community and the wider world.

**Engage**, enthuse and excite children in a safe, but stimulating environment.

**Nurture** the needs and talents of every single child to ensure they learn, succeed and achieve at Halfway Nursery Infants!

### **Curriculum and Aims**

The curriculum forms the basis for our learning and the experiences our children enjoy during their time at Halfway Nursery Infant School. To us, the curriculum goes far beyond the legally required elements of the

National Curriculum 2014 documentation and involves the rich fabric of creative, cultural, sporting and intellectual opportunities that the world offers.

Our curriculum uses the National Curriculum 2014 and Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum 2012 to ensure that every child develops the key learning steps defined within that documentation. However, we have developed a more expansive approach to its delivery that ensures our children receive experiences and opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and attributes in ways that will guarantee that learning is relevant and poignant. We ensure that learning at Halfway Nursery Infants broadens the aspirations, values and opportunities for every child as they grow and develop.

Our curriculum is unique, and is broad, balanced and flexible so that it always adapts and develops to fulfil the needs of every child. It is a curriculum which is child-centred and current. Our curriculum is constantly evolving to ensure that we are responding to a rapidly developing world around us, and that we are offering our children the best start to their lives as successful citizens in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We believe children learn better when they are excited and actively engaged; what excites children best is excellent teaching, which will challenge them and demonstrate what they are capable of achieving. When there is joy in what they are doing, they learn to love learning. The curriculum at Halfway Nursery Infants reflects this.

Our school curriculum aims:

TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF COMMUNITY.	To ensure children understand, value and actively participate in the local, national and global community as citizens who are caring, confident and responsible.
TO VALUE OTHERS' BELIEFS.	To provide children with exposure to and experience of religion, music, art and traditions from a range of cultures and beliefs thus giving children a greater awareness and appreciation of our multicultural society.
TO BE HAPPY, SAFE AND HEALTHY.	To ultimately keep children safe in school so they feel confident enough to express themselves and be happy. Alongside this children will be encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles and have a growing understanding of personal protection.
TO BE RESILIENT AND ADAPTABLE WHEN FACED WITH CHANGES.	To offer challenge, enquiry and problem solving opportunities for children in order to allow them to build perseverance and resourcefulness skills. Children will be taught the skills needed to ensure they are flexible learners ready for their lives in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.
TO CONSERVE THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.	To appreciate all the wonders our beautiful world has to offer. To gain a greater knowledge of how to preserve what is special about the world we live in and how we can keep our world safe from harm for generations to come.
TO LEARN TOGETHER AND WORK AS A TEAM.	To work collaboratively with children and adults from across our community to learn together and share knowledge and skills. To value and respect the efforts and input others make to our lives.
TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHERS IN DIFFERENT WAYS.	To communicate with others to develop the arts of oracy and literacy so that relationships and friendships may be built and forged throughout our school and the wider community.

## **Organisation**

The curriculum at Halfway Nursery Infant School is carried out through the use of an integrated, inclusive and thematic approach to teaching and learning. From the Early Years Foundation Stage, right through to Year 2, the children are taught through the use of an innovative, creative and - most importantly - exciting topic-based approach which provides a wealth of opportunity and experience for the children to learn in a context which is interesting and relevant to them.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, our school plans stimulating and enjoyable topics through the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This document allows teachers to plan carefully creative and engaging activities throughout their themes, ensuring that progress is met in meeting the Early Learning Goals. Key distinguishing features of our Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are the highly effective thematic approach and a strong belief and passion that children learn more effectively through play. Hence, Halfway Nursery Infants operates a play based Foundation Stage curriculum which encompasses our dedication to active learning. This too is reflected in our school's vision to ensure that learning in the Foundation Stage takes place not just in the confines of the classroom, but in the outside learning environment too. All topics in the Foundation Stage include elements of:

- Personal, social and emotional development (prime area)
- Communication and Language (prime area)
- Physical Development (prime area)
- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Expressive Arts and Design
- Understanding the World

For more information regarding the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, please see the Early Years Foundation Stage Policy.

In Key Stage 1, teachers use the school's own unique skills progressions, based on the National Curriculum 2014, as their main reference for lesson objectives. However, our school does not use the QCA schemes of work around which to plan our topics. We have a highly distinctive and flexible concept based curriculum which is built around the National Curriculum 2014, and its identified key areas of learning. Key concepts act as an umbrella 'theme' for the whole school. This then encompasses topics for each year group, which act as vehicles to 'carry' the concept.

Teachers in Key Stage 1 teach in a truly thematic fashion, incorporating the whole curriculum around one exciting, stimulating and thought-provoking topic each half term, which is chosen by the children and then broken down into learning challenge questions for each week. Teaching in this way allows children the opportunity to develop the key skills of learning in a contextualised, familiar and imaginative learning environment.

In Key Stage 1 we teach English and Mathematics each day, and focus on the foundation subjects each afternoon (though our timings are flexible), sometimes 'blocking' certain subjects to cover the whole unit within one week. For example, it is much more beneficial to teach a whole unit of D&T every afternoon for a week, as it allows children to develop essential skills in a more continuous and fluid fashion. Constant breaks in learning can often lead to a disjointed curriculum and uninspired teaching and learning.

Subjects taught in KS1 are:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Computing
- History
- Geography
- Art
- Design and Technology
- Music
- RE
- PSHCE

Please see Appendix 1 for our topic/concept planning programme and Appendix 2 for our topic mapping.

### **Child Progress and Assessment**

The National Curriculum 2014 makes expectations for all learning and attainment explicit to pupils, parents, teachers, governors, employees and the public. It establishes national standards for the performances of all pupils in the stated subjects. These standards enable the teacher to measure progress and attainment.

The national standards and the criteria for each National Curriculum year group for each subject are used to measure performance and achievement. These standards are also used to set targets for improvement, measure progress towards those targets, and monitor and compare performance between individuals, groups of children and other schools.

#### **Formal national assessments**

These are done at each stage of a child's education:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage** – the Early Years Foundation Stage profile is completed during the Reception year, ending in July with a summary of the child's achievements
- **Year 1** – The phonics screening check is completed in June each year and assesses the children's ability to decode and read a list of 40 words. 20 of the words are pseudo words, and the rest are real words.
- **Key Stage 1 (Year 2)** Standardised Assessment Tests/Tasks in English and Maths plus Teacher Assessment in English, Maths and Science. A Level is awarded and reported to parents.

#### **In-school testing/assessment.**

This comprises:

- **Continuous assessment:** done by the teachers in all year groups to determine whether a child has learned / achieved a particular concept. It helps determine the next stage in a child's development.
- **Termly assessments:** These are done in many subjects, but most formally in Maths, English and SPAG, where they are used to track progress through the National Curriculum year group attainment targets.

#### **Reporting to Parents:**

- Parents' Evenings are held in the Autumn and Summer terms to discuss individual children's progress.
- Annual Reports are sent to parents at the end of the Spring term, followed by an informal parent open evening.

(For further information see our schools Assessment and Assessment for Learning Policies)

### **Religious Education and Assembly**

The Education Act (1994) requires our school to provide a daily, corporate act of worship. At Halfway Nursery Infant School each teacher undertakes an act of worship every morning with all the children. Our acts of worship largely have a Christian ethos, but do include stories from other major world religions. Parents wishing to withdraw their children should contact the Head teacher. Halfway Infants has a fully integrated R.E. policy and follows the Sheffield City Council Agreed Syllabus. Again, should parents wish to withdraw their children from this part of the curriculum, they may do so by contacting the Head teacher. The School has no affiliation to any specific religious denomination. For further information, please see the school's policy on Collective Worship.

### **Educational Visits**

We recognise as invaluable the gaining of first hand experience by visiting a location that is linked to an area of study. It can bring the learning to life. We, therefore, encourage as many visits as we can fit in to the year. Some will be in the local area, and some are further afield.

### **Visitors**

We believe in extending the experience of our children wherever possible, and, therefore, we encourage visitors into the school as often as possible. In particular, we try to provide opportunities for visiting artists and performers, so that each child has a range of experience of live theatre, dance and music. Where possible, the children also work with specialist P.E. coaches, science teachers (SHELL) and SEN specialists (Learning Support and SALT).

### **Homework**

Homework is a crucial element of the Home/School partnership. From the outset, it gives parents the opportunity to support their children in their learning whilst enabling them to reinforce the work covered at school. There are varying tasks which are set, and include spellings, sharing reading books and topic work.

Some of the work will be of an investigative nature, in which other members of the family may wish to become involved. Parents who support their children with homework tasks provide a powerful reinforcement of the status of School and of their child's work and education.

### **Entitlement**

#### **Equal Opportunities**

When planning and delivering the curriculum, special consideration is given to the needs of individual pupils according to:

- **Gender:**
  - avoiding stereotypes
  - avoiding gender bias
  - maintaining balance of content.
- **Ethnicity:**
  - avoiding stereotypes
  - avoiding discrimination and bias
  - promoting tolerance and consideration
- **Special Educational Needs (inc. Able, Gifted & Talented):**
  - differentiation of task
  - learning outcomes
  - specific individual areas of learning
- **Disability**
  - Every attempt is to be made to include all children on roll in every area of the curriculum regardless of any disability

The staff at Halfway Nursery Infant School promote a sympathetic and caring environment in order to give all pupils equal opportunities to succeed. The curriculum secures for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities, an entitlement to all areas of learning and the development of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes.