



Happy Hearts Curriculum Policy

Intent:

As children commence their journey of learning at Happy Hearts we begin to develop and nurture strong, positive attitudes where they become proud and respectful of themselves, others, and the environment. This includes the pursuit of excellence and preparing our children as world citizens of the 21st Century. In order for this to be achieved our children need high levels of literacy and numeracy, we see sequential building of skills as essential for life-long learning, so basic skills have been carefully mapped out in English and Mathematics. We offer an ambitious and aspirational curriculum that is broad and balanced, rich, and challenging. We work through a motivating environment that promotes depth in learning, exploration, and adventure.

It is our intent that children develop physically, verbally, cognitively, and emotionally. We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Through our curriculum, we strive to develop the skills, knowledge and learning attitudes of our pupils so that they may become the best that they can be. We aim to plan ongoing opportunities for the children to revisit knowledge and skills through a variety of targeted and independent learning opportunities for children to commit newly acquired knowledge to their long-term memory.

Our vision is for our children to become independent, self-motivated, resilient, creative, problem solvers. We want our children to develop their executive functioning skills and think about and reflect on their learning. It is our goal is to help them to be successful learners and communicators.

Implementation:

At Happy Hearts we meet and exceed the welfare requirements laid down in 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' (2021) and actively safeguard and promote the welfare of all our children.

When planning a curriculum, the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' are at the heart of our provision, and we use Development Matters and Birth to Five supporting documents alongside teachers' professional knowledge of the children to assess the children's progress. We recognise the need for first-hand experiences and right of children to play. The balance of adult directed teaching and independent application provides multiple opportunities for learning across all areas of the curriculum. Warm and positive relationships between staff and children, consistent routines and respectful partnerships with parents are key.

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes work on a broad range of topics and creative themes that are enriched with classroom enhancements and visitors. Planning is reflective, picking up on our children's interests and misconceptions. Topics are supported by quality key texts that are carefully chosen to encourage children's speech, language, and communication development. We prioritise and support children's early communications through the use of songs, nursery rhymes, stories, and providing time for quality interactions between adults and peers.

Skills in Maths are carefully mapped across the year and is supported by (National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics [NCETM]). Reading, phonics, and language are supported by (Letter & Sounds and Jolly Phonics teaching programmes) with an initial emphasis on sound discrimination working towards grapheme/phoneme correspondence. Children are encouraged to become early readers through enjoyment of books and the systematic teaching of phonics. The children develop their mathematical thinking through direct teaching and exploration. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes. We aim to secure some of the key mathematical ideas

that they will use throughout the rest of their lives.

Practitioners working with the younger children will focus strongly on the three prime areas, which are the basis for successful learning in the other four specific areas. The three prime areas reflect the key skills and capacities all children need to develop and learn effectively. The balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning as the children move through the Early Years and grow in confidence and ability.

We provide children access to both indoors and outdoors activities. Our learning environment is adaptable in order to reflect children's interests and progression. The children are supported to learn to work together, manage their feelings and ask questions through skilled adult facilitated play. We understand the importance of parental engagement and believe that our parents have a crucial role to play in their children's education. We work hard to create strong partnerships between home and school and offer a range advise and support through regular meetings, as well as the provision of a secure web-based Parental Portal and a dedicated Parent App for parents/carers to be informed of their child's development on a regular and real-time basis. In addition, we also provide opportunities for parents/carers to engage in their children's learning process by participating in a multitude of programmes, activities, festivals and celebrations offered at Happy Hearts.

As part of the learning and teaching process, children are regularly observed and these ongoing assessment are used to inform planning and next steps in teaching and learning for all children throughout the year. We understand the crucial role that early year's education has to play and in providing firm foundations upon which the rest of a child's education is successfully based.

Impact:

The impact of our curriculum on what children know, can remember and do is strong, children will demonstrate this through being deeply engaged, highly motivated and eager to join in. During their time with us children make rapid progress towards a good level of development, developing a sense of themselves before transitioning into their new schools and classes.

Children develop their characteristics of learning and can apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Children are confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with peers and adults drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing. They show exceptional positive behaviour and high levels of self-control, cooperation, and respect for others.

Our carefully planned curriculum helps children achieve and make sustained progress that leads to outstanding achievement.

Happy Hearts' Educational Programmes

The carefully curated curriculum at Happy Hearts, with its focus on the development of emotional intelligence and learning through play, incorporates the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage with elements of various pedagogical approaches, in particular, the Montessori Method of Education and the Reggio Emilia approach to provide children with the opportunities and experiences that they need to build solid foundations for their later learning. All of these child-centred educational approaches treat each child as a unique individual and see teachers as facilitators of each child's learning. That is, learning primarily through play and at their own pace. The goal at Happy Hearts is to create a learning-rich environment for your child to learn with awe and wonder while developing positive relationships that promote their social skills and ability to self-regulate.

The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum

The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of seven areas of learning that shape our educational programmes:

Communication and Language

Communication underpins all the seven areas of learning where speaking and listening are both fundamental skills for a child to master. The acquisition of these skills will determine the ability of a child to learn as well as give them the confidence to establish positive relationships with adults and peers. At Happy Hearts, we provide continuing opportunities for children to express themselves and develop their confidence in all aspects of communication. We work closely with families of children who speak English as an additional language and provide tailored support to encourage the development of their understanding and speaking skills at every stage.

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development

We encourage the children to work with others and take part in new activities in a way that makes them feel assured and empowered. Children learn best by doing; by fostering self-motivated learning, we facilitate their development as confident, successful individuals capable of interacting with the resources within our environment freely and independently. We respect that every child is an individual and celebrate their unique personalities. By acknowledging their individualities, we understand that not all their needs will be the same. Our child-to-teacher ratio and our carefully appointed key teacher relationships mean that we have the opportunity to acquaint ourselves with your child's needs on a deeper level and thus cater a bespoke educational programme, supporting his/her emotional wellbeing, learning, and development.

Physical Development

We guide the children to develop an understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy food and lifestyle choices for themselves. We develop fine and gross motor skills through fun activities and implement lots of opportunities for children to develop and improve physical coordination. We have daily indoor and outdoor activities, and the children can enjoy a variety of sports, fitness, and movement classes each week. These classes include Tennis, Yoga, Music & Movement, and Forest School.

Literacy

At Happy Hearts, we seek to foster a life-long interest in reading and listening to stories by exposing children to a wide range of books. Language-rich experiences are provided through story-telling and the daily incorporation of songs and nursery rhymes. We follow the Jolly Phonics and Letters and Sounds programmes and incorporate the sounds into games, story-telling, and role-playing activities. Included in the literacy learning area are the many opportunities for mark-making to support fine motor skills and prepare the children for writing so that one day each child can go on to write their own story.

Mathematics

As well as helping children to understand mathematical concepts like number recognition, counting and calculating, and shapes and measurements, we encourage each child to develop their mathematical skills by giving them opportunities to engage with our numerous mathematics activities in both child-led and teacher-led scenarios. Children apply number language and positional vocabulary in play and make sense of the world around them, whilst also learning about the concept of time, space, and the value of money.

Understanding of the World

At Happy Hearts nursery, we start with family books to help the children understand that differences are to be embraced and respected, and through a focus on different cultural festivals throughout the year the children learn to celebrate different cultures within the nursery while learning about the wider global community. We help each child to develop their knowledge of their local community through regular outings, supporting charities, and observing different aspects of the neighbourhood. We also nurture a growing sense of the wider world and the role of technology in daily life. Role-play opportunities support this. British values, such as, democracy, the role of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs are embedded within our curriculum, and our topic-based learning help children to learn and apply their knowledge in their play. We also place great importance on the natural world and our environment, giving children the chance to try their hand at gardening, learning about wildlife, and observing natural habitats through our weekly Forest School.

Expressive Arts and Design

Creativity is crucial to a well-rounded sense of self, and we encourage children to explore their feelings and thoughts through various expressive mediums, such as art, music, movement, design technology, and imaginative role-play. We provide materials, tools, and equipment for the children to use in their creative pursuits, and we facilitate peripatetic support for specialist music, movement, and artistic sessions. The various tools we provide to children within the art corner also help develop children's fine motor skills and confidence, through ongoing opportunities of working with craft supplies such as scissors, paintbrushes, and glue,

Child-centred Educational Philosophies and Pedagogies

At Happy Hearts Nursery and Preschool we set ourselves apart from other nurseries by going beyond the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and incorporating two pioneering child-centred educational approaches into our overarching beliefs and practices; the Montessori Method of education and the Reggio Emilia approach.. All these approaches follow the principle that the purpose of school is to teach children how to succeed in life and not simply how to succeed in the classroom.

Montessori Method

At Happy Hearts we have a strong focus on incorporating elements of the Montessori approach into our educational programs. Maria Montessori is considered a visionary in the field of Early Childhood Education. She developed a practicality-based method for teaching young children in a purposefully organised environment. The Montessori method promotes freedom and experiential learning, learning through doing, and the teachers at Happy Hearts assist children to become independent, giving children the tools and guidance to initiating and performing learning activities by themselves.

The 5 areas of learning within the Montessori classroom:

Practical Life

At school children learn the skills needed for everyday practical living, which are the foundation of the Montessori educational approach. The Practical Life exercises are exciting for a child because they allow them to imitate what adults do daily. These exercises promote independence whilst the child builds up a good self-image, a sense of self-worth and an attitude of responsibility. Practical Life exercises aim to improve children's control of movements, concentration, self-care, and care of the environment.

Sensorial

Happy Hearts Nursery and Preschool provide a variety of opportunities to the children to explore Montessori materials which were purposefully created to educate and refine children's senses. These materials are self-correcting and are introduced to the child by the teachers. The children learn the purpose and the correct way to work with the materials and with time, the children will be able to work independently, removing, replacing, grading, and matching parts of the Montessori sets.

Mathematics

The Practical Life and Sensorial exercises lay the foundations for the mathematical knowledge. The Montessori Materials were created mirroring the decimal system and therefore, all the materials for dimension are presented in sets of ten. Children will begin arranging these objects by attributes and will continue with gradation. At the same time, the children will be introduced to the language of numbers and the environment at Happy Hearts has been carefully designed to build that number awareness, making children conscious that numbers are everywhere. The teachers at Happy Hearts reinforce the child's awareness using the classroom clock, the calendar, playing games, completing jigsaws, and singing number rhymes. The teachers also work with a variety of materials for children to learn quantifying as well as to recognise printed numbers.

Language

The Montessori Approach understands the significance of developing children's sense of hearing. As children's listening skills progress, their spoken language develops consequently. Listening to environmental sounds and the discrimination and recognition of these are part of the daily exercises within our environment. At Happy Hearts we provide a language rich environment, introducing vocabulary to the children through all the activities. The vocabulary is also visible for the children and therefore, they become familiar with prints soon after they begin their journey with us. Children will be taught to recognise both, letters and sounds, and will be guided by the teachers through the important process of writing.

Cultural

Dr. Maria Montessori was convinced that children needed to know and understand the world they live in. Therefore, subjects such as Geography, Biology and History were of a great importance in her approach and were taught interlinked. At Happy Hearts we take children on a journey to discover the world around us which leads them to discover the universe, the solar system, the earth, the continents and therefore, a variety of cultures. This journey aims to awaken the wonder on the world as well as to become aware of the important part they and their families play to make it a better place.

Reggio Emilia Approach

The Reggio Emilia approach recognises the endless potential of the child, which is stretched and challenged through the socialisation process occurring at a nursery setting. The encounter of different cultures makes the school environment the best place for a child to flourish, and our incredible setting provides the perfect learning environment, where the classroom itself is considered in this approach as an educator.

At Happy Hearts Nursery and Preschool, we implement elements of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, and in particular, its Project-Based approach, and we consider children and their families to be at the centre of our educational project. We foster the capacity of children to express their ideas in a variety of ways just as the Italian educator Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994) and founder of the Reggio Emilia approach described in his work 'The Hundred Languages of Children'. We recognise the importance of children growing and learning alongside each other and learning through their own uniqueness and differences.

The 'Project-Base' approach sees teaching as an interactive process, where the teachers are best described as facilitators who give children the opportunity to direct their own learning process, and guide them as they learn through hands-on experiences and first-hand observation. At Happy Hearts we recognise that all children naturally want to learn, and the incorporation of the Project-Based approach helps us to inspire curious minds by allowing the children to play a role in selecting the real-world topics they wish to explore and recognising that each child has their own set of interests, strengths and beliefs that make them unique.

The Project-Based approach rests on the assumption that just like society, education should also be democratic, and educating children with this approach helps them understand what it means to be in a fair and democratic society. Through their own differences, children learn from one another and grow as individuals while they work collaboratively researching a topic, discussing ideas and deciding how they would like to move forward to extend what they already know. This support children's acquisition of social skills as the completion of the project requires the collaboration of children and teachers.