

Early Years Foundation Stage Aspirations & Milestones Documents 2025-2026

At Heatherlands, we believe children need a secure foundation of essential skills to be ready for school. These include the ability to listen and attend, communicate needs and ideas, regulate emotions, cooperate with others, and manage personal care and physical movement. School readiness means that children are curious and enthusiastic about the world around them, can share and take turns, communicate clearly in sentences, listen and understand what is said to them, and move with coordination while managing their own care needs. These foundational skills reflect and support the Heatherlands Way values, enabling children to engage positively with learning.

At Heatherlands, Communication and Language underpins all EYFS aspirations and milestones. Children's ability to listen, understand, use vocabulary and express ideas is fundamental to emotional regulation, social development and access to learning. The milestones within each aspiration are therefore supported by the Reception Communication and Language Progression, which provides a clear, sequenced pathway for developing listening, speaking and conversational skills across the year. Central to Early Years practice at Heatherlands Primary School is the development of executive functioning skills, which enable children to plan, focus attention, regulate behaviour and manage emotions. Through this, children are supported to live out the Heatherlands Way values of respect, resilience, aspiration, motivation and independence. When executive functioning and foundational skills are well established, children develop positive learning behaviours and become confident, proactive learners.

To thrive in school and beyond, children must make strong progress in the Prime Areas of Learning, which underpin success in the Specific Areas. A carefully balanced approach to child-initiated and adult-directed learning, alongside the consistent promotion of the Heatherlands Way values, supports children to build secure foundational skills and achieve the expected standard by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The milestones and aspirations set out in this document are personalised to each cohort, informed by ongoing assessment and the changing needs of the children. They are delivered through our Early Years curriculum, which is guided by a broad overview to ensure coverage of all areas of learning, but is not fixed. The curriculum remains flexible and responsive, allowing practitioners to adapt provision to children's needs, interests and curiosities. In this way, learning remains purposeful, engaging and closely aligned to each child's individual learning journey.

Our Aspirations				
Aspiration 1 To manage emotions and show resilience when facing challenges, including trying new experiences <i>I can notice my feelings, stay calm, and have a go at new or tricky things, asking for help if I need it.</i>	Aspiration 2 To be able to talk about life events and retell a story in their own way. <i>I can tell stories and talk about my own experiences.</i>	Aspiration 3 To be curious and respectful about others, celebrate what makes everyone unique, and become a positive member of our diverse community. <i>I can be curious and respect others</i>	Aspiration 4 To inspire children to explore and appreciate the diverse world they live in and understand their place within it. <i>I can explore and understand the world around me</i>	Aspiration 5 To develop rich vocabulary and use it confidently in communication. <i>I can use new words when I talk about things I see, hear, or do.</i>



Aspirations Overview 2025-2026

Aspiration 1 - To manage emotions and show resilience when facing challenges, including trying new experiences

This is a lively, energetic and highly engaged cohort with an increased need for sensory movement and regulation opportunities. Children are keen to share ideas and have their voices heard; however, some require support to manage impulses, take turns and sustain attention, particularly in group situations. Through explicit teaching, modelling and consistent routines, children will develop the self-regulation skills needed to engage positively with others and persevere when faced with challenge. (PSED)

Aspiration 2 - To be able to talk about life events and retell a story in their own way

Some children have had fewer opportunities to develop spoken language and storytelling skills. Children will be immersed in rich stories, meaningful conversations and first-hand experiences to support vocabulary development. This will enable them to talk confidently about their own lives and experiences and retell stories using their own ideas and language. (C&L, Lit, PD, EAD)

Aspiration 3 - To be curious and respectful about others, celebrate what makes everyone unique, and become a positive member of our diverse community

This cohort reflects a wide range of languages, cultures and lived experiences. Children are developing their understanding of themselves and others and benefit from opportunities to explore similarities and differences within a supportive community. Through inclusive experiences and positive role modelling, children are supported to develop respect, empathy and a strong sense of belonging, enabling them to build positive relationships and participate confidently as members of their community. (PSED, UtW)

Aspiration 4 - To inspire children to explore and appreciate the diverse world they live in and understand their place within it

As many children in this cohort were born during the Covid pandemic, some have had fewer opportunities to explore the wider world beyond their immediate environment. Children benefit from experiences that broaden their understanding of people, places, cultures and environments beyond their own. Through first-hand exploration and meaningful encounters, children are supported to develop curiosity about the world and begin to understand how they are connected to the wider community and world around them. (UTW, PSED, C&L)

Aspiration 5 - To develop rich vocabulary and use it confidently in communication

Children in this cohort are keen to communicate and share ideas with others. Through high-quality interactions, rich stories and meaningful experiences, children will develop a broad vocabulary and increased confidence in expressing themselves. This will support them to listen to others, take turns in conversation and engage positively in a range of social and learning contexts. (C&L, PSED, Lit)

Children will holistically develop the skills and knowledge needed to achieve these aspirations through a carefully balanced approach to child-initiated and adult-directed learning. Provision focuses on the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning and is underpinned by the Characteristics of Effective Learning. We recognise that many children in this cohort were born during the Covid pandemic and may have had fewer experiences; therefore, opportunities are intentionally planned to broaden experiences, build confidence and support rapid progress.

Aspiration 1
To manage emotions and show resilience when facing challenges, including trying new experiences

Programmes of Study
 PSED, C&L, PD, Maths, Literacy, UtW, EAD

Context:
 This is a lively, energetic and highly engaged cohort with an increased need for sensory movement and regulation opportunities. Children are keen to share ideas and have their voices heard; however, some require support to manage impulses, take turns and sustain attention, particularly during play and group situations. Through explicit teaching, modelling and consistent routines, children will develop emotional vocabulary and self-regulation strategies to recognise and manage their feelings, engage positively with others and persevere when faced with challenge.

Milestones	Implementation
<p>End of Autumn Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms secure relationships with adults and peers • Begins to follow rules and routines, with decreasing need for adult reminders • Names basic feelings (e.g. happy, sad, angry, worried) and begins to recognise emotions in others • With adult support, talks through simple conflicts and begins to take turns • Begins to manage frustration and regulate behaviour with support 	<p>How this aspiration is supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit teaching and modelling of emotional vocabulary and self-regulation strategies through daily interactions, high-quality talk and planned PSED sessions. • Jigsaw PSHE is used to support children in recognising, naming and managing emotions, developing empathy, and understanding how to build positive relationships with others. • Consistent routines, clear expectations and visual supports help children anticipate transitions and feel secure within the learning environment. • Planned opportunities for sensory movement and regulation throughout the day, including access to calm spaces and the use of Scribble Spot to support emotional regulation, reflection and calming strategies. • Commando Joes activities provide structured opportunities for teamwork, turn-taking and perseverance, supporting children to work collaboratively, manage emotions and respond positively to challenge. • Adult co-regulation during play and group times, modelling turn-taking, problem-solving and appropriate ways to express feelings. • Targeted nurture or ELSA support for children who require additional help to develop emotional regulation and resilience. • Ongoing observation and assessment are used to adapt provision and support in response to children’s emerging needs.
<p>End of Spring Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to use taught strategies to regulate emotions • Follows rules and routines more consistently, understanding why they are important • Uses a wider range of emotional vocabulary and begins to moderate emotions with support • Shows increasing resilience and willingness to ‘have a go’ • Plays cooperatively with others, taking turns and contributing ideas • Begins to manage own needs with increasing independence 	
<p>Final Milestone (End of EYFS)</p> <p>Self-Regulation (PSED.S-R.ELG)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and use taught strategies to regulate their behaviour 	

- Control impulses appropriately, wait for turns and follow instructions involving more than one step

Managing Self (PSED.MS.ELG)

- Show independence, resilience and perseverance when facing new challenges
- Explain the reasons for rules and manage their own needs, including personal care and routines

Building Relationships (PSED.BR.ELG)

- Work and play cooperatively, taking turns and sharing with others
- Form positive relationships with adults and peers and show sensitivity to others' needs

Assessment links

These aspirations and milestones align with the Early Learning Goals across the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning.

Aspiration 2

To be able to talk about life events and retell a story in their own way

Programmes of Study

(C&L, Lit, EAD, PD)

Context:

Some children have had fewer opportunities to develop spoken language and storytelling skills, including sharing stories and experiencing a range of real-life events. Children will be immersed in rich stories, meaningful conversations and first-hand experiences to support vocabulary development and confidence in speaking. This will enable children to talk about their own lives and experiences and retell stories using their own ideas and language.

Milestones

Milestone One (End of Autumn Term)

- Engages in story time and shows enjoyment of books, rhymes and songs
- Answers simple questions about a text that has been read aloud
- Recalls key events from familiar stories
- Repeats familiar words and phrases from known stories and joins in with repeated refrains
- Begins to repeat new vocabulary within the context of a story
- Talks about own experiences and makes simple links to stories
- Uses familiar story language in play and role play
- Shows preferences for particular books and seeks them out independently or with others

End of Spring Term

- Retells familiar stories using own words, gestures or role play
- Talks about characters, settings and key events
- Asks questions about stories and responds with increasing detail
- Begins to predict what might happen next in a story
- Uses an increasing range of vocabulary in conversation and play
- Uses longer sentences to explain ideas, events and thinking
- Listens attentively during stories and group discussions and responds appropriately
- Takes turns in conversations and sustains talk with peers and adults

Implementation

How this aspiration is supported

- High-quality adult-child interactions and purposeful talk throughout the day
- Regular storytelling, story retelling and discussion using a range of high-quality texts
- Opportunities for children to share personal experiences through talk, role play and storytelling
- Modelling and extension of vocabulary by adults in play and group times
- Children engage with carefully chosen core texts, stories and real-life experiences that are revisited and adapted in response to children's interests and needs
- WellComm is used as a screening tool to identify children who may require additional support with communication and language. Targeted interventions are put in place where needed, and progress is reviewed regularly.

Final Milestone (End of EYFS)

Listening, Attention and Understanding (C&L.LAU.ELG)

- Listens attentively to stories, discussions and instructions and responds appropriately with relevant comments or questions

Comprehension (C&L.COMP.ELG)

- Retells stories and narratives in their own words, using recently introduced vocabulary
- Anticipates key events in stories where appropriate

Speaking (C&L.SP.ELG)

- Talks confidently about past events and experiences using full sentences

Assessment links

These aspirations and milestones align with the Early Learning Goals across the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning.

Aspiration 3

To be curious and respectful about others, celebrate what makes everyone unique, and become a positive member of our diverse community

Programmes of Study

(PSED, UtW)

Context:

This cohort is highly curious, enthusiastic and motivated to explore new ideas. At times, children move quickly between activities or seek adult attention, which can make sustained focus, independence and perseverance more challenging. Through carefully planned, practical and sensory-rich experiences, children will be supported to develop sustained engagement, independence and resilience when exploring new challenges.

Milestones

End of Autumn Term

- Forms positive relationships with adults and peers
- Shows interest in other children and begins to play alongside others
- Talks about their own family, home and people who are important to them
- Begins to recognise that others may have different experiences or preferences
- With adult support, shows kindness and respect towards others and shared resources

End of Spring Term

- Plays cooperatively with peers, sharing resources and taking turns
- Begins to talk about similarities and differences between themselves and others
- Shows curiosity about different families, traditions or celebrations
- Uses simple language to express feelings and respond to the feelings of others
- With support, helps to resolve minor conflicts and understands the impact of their actions

Final Milestone (End of EYFS)

Building Relationships (PSED.BR.ELG)

- Work and play cooperatively, taking turns and sharing with others
- Form positive relationships with adults and peers and show sensitivity to others' needs

Self-Regulation (PSED.S-R.ELG)

Implementation

How this aspiration is supported

- An inclusive, community-focused environment that reflects children's identities, families and lived experiences, supporting all children to feel valued and develop a strong sense of belonging.
- Mini Me dolls, Class Family Books, and resources in the home corner and dolls house are used to help children see themselves and others represented in the setting, and to recreate and explore their own family structures, cultures and experiences through play.
- Carefully chosen core texts, stories and real-life experiences that celebrate diversity, difference and belonging, and encourage discussion about similarities and differences between people.
- Explicit teaching and modelling of kindness, respect and empathy through daily interactions, circle times and planned PSED sessions.
- Opportunities for children to work and play collaboratively, supported by adults who model turn-taking, sharing, listening and respectful communication.
- Adult support to help children recognise and talk about their own feelings and the feelings of others, supporting positive relationships and conflict resolution
- Ongoing observation and assessment to adapt provision and ensure experiences reflect the needs and backgrounds of the cohort.

- Consider the feelings and perspectives of others and respond appropriately in social situations

Understanding the World (People, Culture and Communities ELG)

- Talk about similarities and differences between themselves and others, including families, communities and traditions
- Show respect and curiosity towards people with different experiences, beliefs and backgrounds

Assessment links

These aspirations and milestones align with the Early Learning Goals across the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning.

Aspiration 4

To inspire children to explore and appreciate the diverse world they live in and understand their place within it

Programmes of Study

(PSED, UTW, C&L)

Context:

This cohort reflects a wide range of languages, cultures and lived experiences. As many children were born during the Covid pandemic, some have had fewer opportunities to explore the wider world beyond their immediate environment. An inclusive and representative curriculum supports children to develop a strong sense of belonging, build positive relationships, and show respect and curiosity about others. With a higher proportion of children who speak English as an additional language, the curriculum is designed to reflect all children's identities and experiences, supporting their sense of belonging and cultural identity.

Milestones**End of Autumn Term**

- Talks about their own home, family and immediate environment
- Shows interest in the natural world through exploration and play
- Begins to notice similarities and differences between people, places and environments
- Talks about familiar routines, celebrations and events in their own life
- Uses simple language to describe what they see, hear and experience

End of Spring Term

- Talks about different families, homes and communities
- Begins to understand that people live in different places and have different experiences
- Shows curiosity about the natural environment and how it changes
- Talks about special times, celebrations and traditions beyond their own experiences
- Begins to use vocabulary related to the world, environments and communities

Final Milestone (End of EYFS)

Linked to Understanding the World ELG (People, Culture and Communities & The Natural World)

- Talk about similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries

Implementation**How this aspiration is supported**

- An inclusive, representative environment that reflects children's cultures, languages, families and experiences.
- Carefully planned core texts, stories, visitors and real-life experiences that broaden children's understanding of the world and their place within it.
- Opportunities for discussion, questioning and reflection, supported by adults who model curiosity, respect and inclusive language.
- First-hand experiences, visits and exploration that help children make connections between their own lives and the wider world.
- Ongoing observation and assessment to adapt provision and ensure experiences reflect the needs and interests of the cohort.
- Resources within the provision reflect a wide range of cultures, communities and lived experiences, helping children to see diversity as a natural and valued part of everyday life.
- Children learn about different beliefs, traditions and practices through meaningful experiences and discussion, including celebrations such as Holi, Persian New Year and Lunar New Year.
- These experiences are carefully planned to deepen understanding, encourage curiosity and respect, and help children make connections between their own lives and the wider world.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe different environments and talk about features of the natural world• Show curiosity and respect towards different cultures, traditions and ways of life• Begin to understand how people care for their environment and community• Talk confidently about the world beyond their immediate experience | |
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Assessment Links

These aspirations and milestones align with the Early Learning Goals across the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning.

Aspiration 5 To develop rich vocabulary and use it confidently in communication	
Programmes of Study (C&L, PSED, Lit)	
Context: Children in this cohort are keen to communicate and share ideas with others. Through high-quality interactions, rich stories and meaningful experiences, children will develop a broad vocabulary and increased confidence in expressing themselves. This will support them to listen to others, take turns in conversation and engage positively in a range of social and learning contexts.	
Milestones	Implementation
End of Autumn Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses familiar words and short phrases to talk about play, experiences and interests • Listens to others and responds with simple answers or comments • Begins to use new vocabulary introduced through stories, songs, routines and Curiosity Cubes • Joins in with familiar rhymes, songs and repeated phrases • Talks about objects, pictures or experiences with adult support • Begins to start and respond to conversations with adults and peers 	How this aspiration is supported <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality adult-child interactions that model, extend and introduce new vocabulary throughout the day. • Regular exposure to carefully chosen core texts, stories, rhymes and songs to support language development and deepen understanding of words and meaning. • Purposeful opportunities for talk during play, group times and shared experiences, where adults encourage children to explain ideas, ask questions and use new vocabulary. • Language prompts are used within the learning environment and by adults to support sentence structure, extend responses and encourage children to use new vocabulary in context. • Curiosity Cubes are used to spark discussion, questioning and exploratory talk, supporting children to describe, explain and extend their thinking using a widening range of vocabulary. • Modelling of good listening, turn-taking and conversational skills by adults. • Ongoing observation and assessment to identify children who need additional language support and adapt provision accordingly.
End of Spring Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses an increasing range of vocabulary to describe events, objects and ideas • Begins to explain thinking and ask simple questions to check understanding • Uses longer sentences to express ideas and link thoughts together • Listens attentively and takes turns in conversations with growing independence • Uses vocabulary from stories, experiences and Curiosity Cubes in play and discussion • Uses talk to organise play, explain ideas and solve simple problems 	
Final Milestone (End of EYFS) Listening, Attention and Understanding (C&L.LAU.ELG) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listens attentively during stories, discussions and interactions and responds appropriately with relevant comments or questions 	

Speaking (C&L.SP.ELG)

- Uses a wide and varied vocabulary to communicate ideas, needs and experiences clearly
- Speaks confidently in familiar groups and situations, using full sentences
- Explains ideas and events using recently introduced vocabulary

Assessment Links

These aspirations and milestones align with the Early Learning Goals across the Prime and Specific Areas of Learning.