

North Heath Community Primary School – Needs Statement

The statutory requirement for the end of Reception, as stated in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum, is that children at the expected level of development in Physical Development will: *'Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others; Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing; Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing'* It is also required that *'schools must provide outdoor play with access to a wider range of movements that they can't do indoors in a typical learning setting, such as balancing, swinging, climbing, running or digging.'* Wear and tear of our external provision over the last 20 years means that the outside learning area at North Heath does not provide adequately for this. Prompt action is needed before the current surfacing worsens even further, leading to restricted use for our pupils in respect of their safety and disadvantaging learning and progress across all seven areas of learning and development. Therefore, through our School Development Plan, North Heath Governors have agreed to improve this element of provision in our school.

It is well documented that physical activity has great health benefits for children and is vital in children's all-round development and well-being, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Children who are more physically active perform better academically and have improved memory, and attention. A well-equipped, safe, stimulating outdoor learning environment that is freely accessible to all our children is crucial in meeting our pupils' needs and ensuring they thrive to meet their full potential.

In addition to this, with the EYFS Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning at the heart of the curriculum, the development of our outdoor learning environment plays an essential part in ensuring children have the range of opportunities they need to practise and develop the key characteristics of *'Playing and Exploring'*, *'Active Learning'* and *'Creating and Thinking'*. Equipping our pupils with the resources and opportunities to embed these skills will lead to independent, confident, resourceful learners, which in turn will positively impact the learning journey of all pupils beyond Reception.

Along with PSED and Communication and Language, Physical Development is a Prime Area within the EYFS curriculum. Physical Development has an impact on all other aspects of learning including writing, Understanding the World and Expressive Arts and Design. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. In recent years our entry measures of achievement, especially post Covid, show an increasing need to prioritise Physical Development, Communication & Language and Personal Social and Emotional Development. An increasing number of inactive children and delayed Speech and Language needs have greatly contributed to this. Opportunities to enhance these skills are vital and with insufficient quality outside space and resources, progress has been limited. We look to enable this further with the development of all-weather play and learning resources, both inside and outside. This will benefit not only the pupils in Reception but also the rest of the school, as all learning is based on the foundations laid in the Early Years.

Business wise, the numbers of pupils in the area has dropped significantly recently, leaving us 16 short of our admission number this year. We are duty bound to raise the standard of our Reception outdoor area so that the school can provide for adequate numbers to maintain our financial stability and serve the community in which it is placed.

Finally, the development will benefit our community, with the resources available for use by our local nursery, during events such as our summer and Christmas fayres, community picnics, transition events, sports days and numerous parental visits and occasions throughout the academic year. It will also provide an excellent resource in supporting the emotional and development needs of our SEN pupils and Year 1 pupils working within the EYFS curriculum.