

Bullion Lane
Primary School



Early Years Foundation Stage
Policy

Intent

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework and incorporate experiences and opportunities which best meet the learning and developmental needs of all children, thus allowing them to flourish. We recognise that children come into our setting with varied experiences and because of this, our staff work hard to ensure that the learning opportunities provided widen pupils' knowledge and understanding, giving them the best possible start to their education.

- We aim to provide children with the vital knowledge and skills that they need to acquire in order to achieve the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception whilst also preparing them for the National Curriculum in Year One.
- We recognise that speaking and listening is a crucial element in Early Years. Communication and Language is identified as a prime area of learning, and many of the early learning goals make explicit reference to children's ability to talk about their knowledge, skills, and understanding. We have built our curriculum around high quality texts that promote vocabulary development and enable us to further extend and develop children's language.
- We aim to support and empower our parents in developing a love of reading with their child(ren) as we know that this can have a significant impact on a child's future learning experiences and attainment.
- We take pride in creating a highly inclusive environment, where children of all abilities demonstrate high levels of enjoyment in their education. Learning is carefully designed to ensure all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential. Those who are most able, are challenged to master a concept and learning is extended. Pupils who are identified as needing more support are given additional opportunities to work in a small group to embed skills, to develop at their own pace and learn in a way which is suitable for their individual needs.

Audience

This document relates to pupils in the Foundation Stage.

This policy is intended for all teaching staff and staff with classroom responsibilities, the School Governors, parents, inspection teams and Durham LA.

This policy document, after presentation to, and agreement by, the staff and Governing Body, is available to all teaching and non-teaching staff and the School Governors.

Philosophy

Implementation

Our aim at Bullion Lane is to ensure we offer

- a broad and balanced curriculum, by planning sequences of activities that provide meaningful learning experiences and build on pupils' prior learning.
- provide a careful balance of both adult-led and child-initiated learning opportunities.
- develop children's enthusiasm and promote a love for reading as this is fundamental in helping to develop their language skills and in closing the word gap.
- use core texts that stimulates discussion about the world around us and enable us to promote a love of learning through real-life and engaging experiences.
- provide high-quality interactions with adults where staff act as role models to the children they teach in order for children to develop their own speaking and listening skills.
- value the importance of effective communication which encourage all our children to communicate effectively using a wide range of strategies.
- carefully assess what the children are doing and then using this to inform the next steps of learning to effectively meet individual pupil needs.
- develop an effective, engaging and stimulating environment so that children can access all areas of learning both inside and outside at any one time.
- plan and organise the continuous provision which allows for all children to learn effectively through play.
- develop strong parental partnerships which empower parents to support their child's learning at home.

We believe that:

Care and education are inseparable.

Parents are vitally important and should be viewed as partners in their child's learning and development.

Every child is an individual and should be treated with respect regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity or ability.

Every child should be responsible for their own learning by being encouraged to make choices, enjoy success and feel secure enough to make and learn from their mistakes.

'First hand' experiences, play and talk are essential ways in which children learn about themselves, other people and the world around them.

Teaching & learning style

Features of good practice in our Early Years Foundation Stage include:

- Partnership between parents and teachers, so that children feel secure and develop a sense of well-being and achievement.
- Staff understanding of how children develop and learn in the early years and how this can affect teaching provision.
- A range of approaches that provide 'first-hand' experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop understanding through talk.
- A carefully planned curriculum that reflects the principles in the 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five'(DFE 2014) and that works towards children achieving the 'Early Learning Goals' by the end of the Foundation Stage.
- The support for learning with appropriate and fully accessible indoor and outdoor work-spaces.
- The identification of future learning needs of children through careful observation and record-keeping.
- Clear aims for our work and regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do.
- Regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Play in the Foundation Stage

'Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. In playing, they behave in different ways: sometimes their play will be boisterous, sometimes they will describe and discuss what they are doing, sometimes they will be quiet and reflective as they play.' (QCA, 2000, p. 25)

We believe 'play' is vital for children to explore and make sense of the world around them. They practise and build-up ideas, learn how to make decisions for themselves and to cooperate with others. They have an opportunity to think creatively and play alone or seek others to share experiences with. Children communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems for themselves.

Organisation

The 'Foundation Stage' is divided into 3 year groups:

Nursery 1 - children aged 2 years (15 hours Play and Learn)- between 8 and 16 places

Nursery 2 - Children aged 3 - 4yrs (15/30 hours) - 78 places.

Reception - children aged 4 - 5yrs (full time) - 45 places.

There are 2 teachers, 4 Grade 6 Key workers, 1 Grade 5 curriculum support staff, 3 Grade 3 curriculum support staff and 1 Grade 3 children's personal hygiene support.

Nursery School Provision

Children can access their 15 hours free entitlement (per week, term time only) from the term after their 3rd birthday. We offer a very flexible attendance pattern: 5 half days morning or afternoon or a mixture of both 2 full days and 1 half day or 1 full day and 3 half days. Parents can pay for extra top up sessions if there are places available. The two year old 'Play and Learn' places are available the term after the child's 2nd birthday if parents have received a Golden ticket from Durham County Council. This 15 hours free entitlement again can be taken as 5 half days morning or afternoon or a mixture of both 2 full days and 1 half day or 1 full day and 3 half days depending on availability.

The 'Foundation Stage' has a shared philosophy and methods of working. All staff are involved in the planning of the curriculum, including long, medium and short-term plans.

Progression and Continuity

'The Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage. Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (DFE 2014) is the core reference document. There are seven areas of learning. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

Personal, social and emotional development

Communication and language

Physical Development

And the four Specific Areas of Learning, are:

Literacy

Mathematics

Understanding of the World

Expressive arts and design

The EYFS outlines (DFE,2013) 'developmental ladders' that show the development of knowledge, skills and understanding for children aged birth to 5 years. They help practitioners to observe, plan and assess activities with children based on their individual development and needs. The final 'Early Learning Goals' are the stage that most children are expected to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Planning

Activities in the Foundation Stage are a balance of teacher directed and child initiated activities, as advocated by the EPPE Project (Sylva et. al. 2004) which are matched to the abilities of the children and structured in such a way that the children can develop further skills and understanding. Activities are developed from objectives in the EYFS guidance and the Foundation Stage profile points. Planned regular observations are made by practitioners, which lead to assessments of the children's needs and achievements. The Foundation teams meet weekly to discuss observations, planning and other issues.

Long Term Planning

Our Long Term Planning is based on 'Key Experiences' over the year as well as the Daily Routine and how these support different areas of the curriculum.

Medium Term Planning

Medium term planning (half termly) takes into account cultural celebrations, special occasions, children's interests and curriculum coverage. Continuous Provision plans are updated termly on 'areas' of the Foundation Stage, how they support children's learning and the role of the adult in them.

Short Term Planning

A weekly timetable detailing 'Adult Led' small group time activities as well as large group time sessions. Short term planning takes into account children's interests, daily phonics sessions and uses information collected from staff observations.

Partnership with Parents

We believe in the importance of working in partnership with parents. The following are examples of good practice in our Foundation Stage:

- Regular 'Stay and Play' sessions for parents, grandparents and carers.
- Special activities, e.g. Easter crafts, Christmas production, parent-child swimming sessions.
- Encouraging parents to come on trips as often as possible.
- Regular informal contact with parents at beginning and end of sessions.
- Target-setting/progress days in Nursery and Reception.
- Regular up-dates for parents of children identified with SEN.
- End of year parent interviews for Nursery children.
- Parents can read and make comments on their child's online Journal and add observations of their own.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Observational assessment

Our daily work involves constant observations and on-going formative assessment. This is to ensure children are making progress and that the experiences we offer reflect where the children 'are' and what can extend their learning. Observations should then form the basis of planning for the following weeks activities.

Foundation Stage Profile

We use the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage 'Development Matters' (July 2021) to help us design an effective early years curriculum, building on the strengths and meeting the needs of the children we work with and to guide our professional judgement in our ongoing assessment of our pupils.

On entry assessment is carried out at the beginning of Nursery and is continued throughout each child's time in Nursery and then continued in Reception for those children working well below National Expectations. In Foundation 2 staff assess against the Foundation Stage Profile.

The analysis of this data, by Durham County Council, forms the basis of a more detailed scrutiny by the Headteacher to identify patterns of attainment and areas of strength and weakness in our provision.

The assessment sheets are passed onto new teachers at periods of transition.

Record Keeping

Each child within the Foundation Unit has a learning Journey Folder. Inside the folder, staff will keep written observations, photographs, records of achievement, contributions from parents, children's work etc throughout each child's time with us. These remain in school while the child is in the Foundation Stage. They can be accessed during Stay and Play sessions, target setting days and parent interview days. For those children placed on the SEND register, documents will be stored in accordance with the SEND policy.

Reports

Reception parents receive a written report annually, in the Summer Term. This details their child's development in relation to the seven areas of learning.

Reception Parent interviews/Target setting

Parents are invited to attend parent interviews to discuss their child's progress in the Autumn and Spring terms.

Nursery 1 and 2 Parent Interviews

Parents are invited to attend parent interviews to discuss their child's progress at the end of the Summer Term. On school Target setting days in the Autumn and Spring Terms parents are invited to come and discuss their child's progress with their Key Worker.

Expectations

Resources and Accommodation

INSET Provision

INSET/CPD for the Early Years Foundation Stage will be provided in line with any priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

We believe that all our children matter, regardless of age, gender, race and ability. In planning and delivering the Foundation Stage curriculum, practitioners have regard to the following:

- Setting suitable learning challenges that are realistic yet challenging.
- Responding sensitively to the diverse learning needs of all children, including those who are more able.
- Supporting children with Special educational needs and disability (SEND)

We have close links with Bullion Lane Children's Centre (Sure Start), the Speech and Language Therapy Service, Health and Social Care, Health Visitors and the School Nurse. Staff use observational assessment to identify children with SEND as soon as possible and make referrals to appropriate outside agencies.

Monitoring & evaluation

The Early Years Manager monitors planning at the start of each half-term.

A scrutiny of the Foundation Stage curriculum is undertaken on a regular basis by the Early Years Manager in the areas of resources, planning and data analysis.

The Headteacher and Early Years Manager monitor teaching in the Foundation Stage with a cycle of lesson observations.

Impact

- From their own starting points, children will make excellent progress academically and socially, developing a sense of themselves so that they are well prepared for the transition into Key Stage 1.
- Children will demonstrate high levels of engagement in activities, developing their speaking and listening skills, enabling them to access more areas of the learning and communicate to both adults and children.
- Children will develop skills across all areas of the curriculum including Literacy, Mathematics and Physical Development using these in different ways.
- Children will have developed a wider sense of the world around them and can draw on these experiences during interactions with others and link this to new learning.
- Children will have developed their Characteristics of Learning and be able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding.
- Children will be confident to take risks and discuss their successes and failures with adults drawing on their experiences to improve or adjust what they are doing.
- Children will be successful learners and fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they transition from Foundation Stage to Year One.
- We will also aim to help children to make sense of the world around them, to develop tolerance, compassion and an understanding of their rights and the rights of others in an ever evolving world.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Next review date: February 2024