



Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Brookhill Leys Primary School

2015

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Introduction

At Brookhill Leys Primary School we believe that Early Years education is of the utmost importance. As the first stage in the education system it is crucial in establishing positive attitudes and relationships. It forms the basis for future learning and is an education that encompasses all learning. The Early Years Foundation stage comprises Foundation Stage 1 (Nursery) and Foundation Stage 2 (Reception). This forms a distinct stage in a child's education and staff work together to provide a consistent approach.

We believe that children in Early Years Foundation Stage are entitled to a curriculum that is broad, balanced, appropriate and based on an understanding of the particular needs of young children. The curriculum is delivered in accordance with Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, produced by the DCFS 2012. We use the Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012 and Early Years Outcomes (Sept 2013) documents as guidance for the appropriate content of the curriculum and the overlapping ages and stages of development.

Aims

The aims for the Early Years Foundation Stage are encapsulated in the schools mission statement, and the overarching principles of the Statutory Framework, Children are unique and will develop at different rates and in different ways. We aim to provide positive relationships and enabling environments so that all children including those with special needs will fulfil their own potential. We continually strive to take children's learning forward through a well-planned and resourced curriculum, delivered in a secure and caring environment.

We consider it vitally important that each child should feel valued and successful and are committed to providing the highest standards of education and care. High priority is given to establishing an effective partnership with parents.

Principles of Early Years Education

Policy and practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage are firmly based upon the following principles as outlined in the Statutory Framework 2012. There are four overarching principles. Within all these we feel developing a growth mindset to be of upmost importance and specifically plan with these principles at Brookhill.

- ✓ Every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

- ✓ Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**.

- ✓ Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between staff and carers.
- ✓ **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.**

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning. The principles are focused around observation, assessment and planning; support for every child; the learning environment; and the wider context – transitions, continuity, and multi-agency working.

Learning and Development recognises that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates, and that all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected

1. Effective education requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements.
2. Effective education requires practitioners who understand that children develop rapidly during the early years – physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially.
3. Practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.
4. Early years' experience should build on what children already know and can do.
5. No child should be excluded or disadvantaged.
6. Parents and practitioners should work together.
7. To be effective, an Early Years curriculum should be carefully structured.
8. There should be opportunities for children to engage in activities (planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves.)
9. Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children.
10. Well planned and purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process.
11. For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and organised.
12. Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high-quality care and education by practitioners.

At Brookhill we seek to follow and implement these principles in all aspects of Foundation Stage provision practice.

Areas of learning

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape planning, teaching, learning and assessments for our children in F1 and F2. All the areas are important and interconnected. Three areas are particularly crucial for inspiring children with enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These are the **prime areas**.

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

In addition there are 4 specific areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design.

As well as these areas of learning, the children should also demonstrate the '**Characteristics of Effective Learning**', fitting within our growth mindset principles, as these are often a good indicator for success at future key stages. These are:

- **Playing and exploring** – being willing to have a go, find out and explore
- **Active Learning** – concentrating, enjoying and keeping on trying
- **Creating and thinking critically** – having their own ideas, choosing ways to do things, based on what they already know.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning must be reported on, as well as the other seven areas of the EYFS curriculum at the end of FS2.

These areas of learning underpin and prepare children for future learning in the National Curriculum and some children may begin the transition to national curriculum work during their FS2 year. The FS1 and FS2 staff team work very closely together in order to ensure continuity and progression for all children.

Planning

All areas of learning in the EYFS curriculum are carefully planned to enable children to have many rich and stimulating experiences and to ensure that each child feels included. Foundation Stage 1 and 2 staff plan topics suitable for the interests and abilities of different cohorts of children with appropriate differentiation to ensure continuity and progression for different ages and abilities. Often children are consulted in the planning process and learning can be adapted to link with children's specific interests or needs. Topics are based half termly around a specific book.

Long term plans are drawn up to ensure coverage of all areas of learning over the year. Medium term planning is undertaken on a half - termly basis. Short term plans give the day to day structure and are informed by the previous week's or days evaluations, observations and

assessments. Plans cover work for the class groups and individuals. Learning objectives and success criteria are linked to the age bands of learning in Development Matters.

All members of the Foundation Stage team are involved in planning at all stages. In both F1 and F2 assessments activities for the whole class or groups of children are identified in the planning. Through our planning we aim to meet the needs of all children. By identifying the next steps in children's learning we can plan how to help them make progress. Knowing the children well is the key to effective planning. Enabling children to learn depends on knowing what they can do, identifying what comes next and knowing when it is time to intervene. It is our aim to continually support and challenge young children's learning.

Organisation of the learning environment

The learning environment includes all aspects of provision and is the framework within which children develop their skills, competencies, knowledge and attitudes. It is essential to organise and manage the learning environment so that it reflects our aims, values and purpose and in doing so enhances children's learning. Effective organisation involves careful planning and attention to detail combined with flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the children.

Of prime importance is the establishment of good and effective relationships between children, staff and parents in order to create a positive atmosphere where children feel safe, secure, valued, supported and ready to learn.

We organise the learning environment to provide for the needs of all children (taking into account e.g. age, abilities, interests, prior experience) so that learning is promoted through enjoyable, challenging and achievable activities.

The physical environment

We aim for the physical environment to reflect high standards at all times. It is carefully planned ensuring that health and safety issues are addressed and OFSTED safeguarding in Early Years (2015) is completely met.

We strive to create a welcoming, attractive and stimulating environment including provision of interactive displays wherever possible.

Displays are appropriately labelled to inform parents/carers and to show the learning processes involved.

We ensure that resources and equipment are of high quality, well maintained and accessible to the children.

Areas are well defined and sited appropriately.

Labelling is clear with symbols/pictures as necessary.

Children's work is valued highly and displayed with care.

Children are encouraged to feel 'ownership' of responsibility for their environment by having opportunities to make suggestions/decisions concerning its organisation eg planning role play areas, making signs and helping set up displays.

Planning time and space

Routines are established to give a 'rhythm' to the day which helps children feel secure and gain confidence. All routines are planned with sensitivity to the needs of the children and take into account of the differing needs of the youngest children entering F1 to those of the older F2 children.

We think it is important to give children time to develop their interests, engage in activities for a sustained length of time and to become absorbed. They are given opportunities to return to and revisit over a period of time.

We recognise the vital importance of well-planned play in children's learning and allow time for adults to give support through planned play activities and spontaneous play.

We aim to provide an effective balance of directed and self-chosen activities as appropriate to the needs of children as they progress through the foundation stage. Our planning provides opportunities for class, group and individual learning experiences to ensure a broad balanced curriculum accessible to all children.

The outdoor environment is carefully planned to provide high quality learning experiences in all areas of the curriculum. We consider outdoor play of great importance and recognise that some children learn more readily outside. As in the indoor environment there should be space and time for quiet areas of activities.

Organising and managing opportunities for independence

At Brookhill Leys we place great importance on developing independence, self-motivation and self-reliance and try to organise the learning environment accordingly.

Children are able to access resources and equipment as they need them (e.g. on the technology table and writing centres).

We encourage children to take responsibility by teaching them how to care for equipment, tidy up etc.

We involve children in discussing rules on our systems. Our school behaviour policy is inclusive from F1 – Year 6, throughout each stage of learning – age appropriate rewards and sanctions apply.

Children are encouraged to co-operate and collaborate on a day to day basis and through planned activities.

Children are always encouraged to try for themselves and use their own ideas.

Through well planned play we hope children will explore a range of experiences, practise and develop skills, understand the need for rules, take risks and make mistakes be alone and with others, solve problems, communicate and think creatively. In doing so we hope children will grow in confidence and independence.

Assessment, Recording and reporting to parents

We record the children's progress in all seven areas of the Statutory Framework using the best fit approach of the age band statements. We have a baseline assessment at the start of F1 and F2 and assessment points at the end of each term. We are now also undertaking the national reception baseline assessments provided by Early Excellence. These are reported by mid-October and the analysis is available from mid-November. The children's achievements are recorded on School Pupil Tracker system for the analysis of progress. Activities may be organised for the whole class or groups of children to assess skills –results of all types of assessments are used to inform planning.

In addition to more formal assessments staff are continually observing and assessing children's achievements and areas for future development. Short observations and post it observations are included in F2 children's 'Learning Journey' books along with photographs and children's recorded work. These are an open document for parents to look at any time, and they are discussed in depth on parent's evenings.

Individual assessments are kept for each child starting from F1 and continuing in F2. At the end of F2, Profile scores are currently submitted to the Authority and are then transferred onto the Primary School Pupil Tracker tracking system at the start of Year One. We believe in the importance of keeping parents well informed regarding their child's progress. Parents have the opportunity to attend termly open days and when their child leaves F1 they receive a detailed written report on all areas of learning which includes the next steps for their child. They have the opportunity to discuss the report and see their child's work. In F2 there are information meetings and open evenings. There are also two written reports, one in February and one at the end of the summer term, with targets for future learning.

Should a child be experiencing learning difficulties or developmental difficulties it is our aim to discuss our concerns with parents as soon as possible and involve outside agencies without delay if appropriate.

Equal opportunities

We aim at all times to give each child equality of opportunity and he/she is helped to develop positive attitudes. See school Equal Opportunity Policy. We do not stereotype through toys, colours or role play.

Special Education Needs

Children with special needs are identified and carefully monitored in accordance with Special Needs Code of Practice to ensure they progress. There are reviews for children identified with significant needs involving parents and outside agencies. When planning the delivery of the EYFS curriculum teachers ensure there is appropriate differentiation to enable all children to access the curriculum at their own level and hence make progress. This may involve a “small step” approach for some children and extension activities for the more able. There may be specifically planned activities or differentiation may be by outcome. Further reference should be made to the whole school S.E.N. policy. F2 also operate narrowing the gap groups for children entering F2 below ARE for On Entry to F2.

At Brookhill Leys we are strongly committed to supporting all children with a Special Education Need. We are aware of the many complex and different needs of individuals (Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD and ASD) and aim to make provision for these in all lessons. Through training and resources children are supported by all adults both within and outside of the classroom.

Partnership with Parents

“Parental involvement does not merely contribute to quality but is essential if early education is to be successful” (Education, Science and Arts Committee).

At Brookhill Leys we firmly believe in the importance of working in partnership with parents in order to secure the best possible education for the children in our care. We recognise and respect parents as their child’s first educator. The Foundation Stage setting provides a unique opportunity for establishing positive relationships with parents. We believe it is our responsibility to create the right atmosphere of mutual respect and effective communication in which a worthwhile partnership can develop. Our admission procedures aim from the outset to begin this partnership. Please see the Admissions Policy. We believe that if good relationships and effective partnership are established during the EYFS it encourages parents to have a positive and supportive attitude towards school which is highly beneficial to the individual child’s future education and the whole school community.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues throughout the school including the EYFS are covered in the school Health and Safety Policy. In addition our site manager has detailed risk assessments and ensures that rigorous safety checks (e.g. checking of the fire alarms and the quality of the water) are carried out regularly.

Transfer from F1 to F2

All F2 children now start as one cohort at the start of the Autumn term. Every effort is made to ensure a smooth transition. A meeting is held for parents and new entrants into FS2 are invited to join school for a few days before the summer break, leading to full time by the end of this transition, in their new classroom with their new teachers.

Prior to this, children have had many opportunities to mix with F2, KS1 and KS2 children.

All Foundation Stage records are passed on to Yr 1 staff and F1 and F2 staff meet, to ensure that the next teacher understands specific needs of individual children. F2 staff meet Year One staff at the end of the Summer term to discuss each child at length.

Role of Adults

In F1 the staffing consists of one teacher and one teaching assistant who work together very closely. In F2 there are two teachers and teaching assistants.

There may be additional teaching assistant support for any children with significant needs identified on the Special Needs register, following discussion with the school SENCO. When appropriate, we regularly have Early Year students. All adults in the EYFS are either CRB or DBS checked as appropriate.

Parents are encouraged to help with a variety of activities.

The EYFS teachers are responsible for the delivery of the EYFS curriculum and for ensuring that all adults within the setting are well informed and understand the principles underlying provision and the learning objectives and success criteria for the activities with which they are involved.

EYFS staff are encouraged to attend relevant courses to ensure ongoing staff development.

The role of adults in the EYFS is clearly set out in various sections of the Statutory Framework. Essentially the adults role is to support children's learning and to ensure that all children are able to fulfil their potential in all areas of learning.

Links With Other Agencies

EYFS staff liaise with outside agencies such as the education psychology service, speech therapists, health visitors, behaviour support service, community paediatrician, occupational health, family centres, social services and the pre-school support team. We have links with local universities and have provided placements for nursery T.A and teaching students.

Staff liaise with local settings as appropriate through Surestart. F2 transfer details between schools and private settings in the local area. In F2 we welcome children from several pre-school settings.

Complaints procedure

In the first instance parents should address complaints to EYFS staff. If there are still concerns they should see the head teacher and, if still unhappy, can obtain copies of the formal complaints procedure in our school or on our website.

Assuring Quality

At Brookhill Leys we constantly strive to provide the highest education for all the children in our care whatever their needs. We are very aware that children who are happy and feel safe, learn the best!

This policy will be reviewed in Sept 2016.

J.S. Sept 2015