

# Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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## Brookside Primary School

Championing Children's Potential

## Introduction

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their schooling. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development. This is available to children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. These children are in the final year of the EYFS. In the National Curriculum this is referred to as the Reception Year, or YR.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Brookside Primary School. In the policy the term 'practitioner' refers to the members of staff working with children within the setting. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS at Brookside.

## Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

In the EYFS at Brookside Primary School we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually and emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential. We are committed to our school being a safe and inclusive place where learning is nurtured and encouraged in a happy, caring and fun environment. We all work for our school to be a happy place where good behaviour is expected and all children enjoy their educational journey.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

## The Early Years Framework

At Brookside Primary School we adhere to the Early Years framework. All children in the EYFS have access to a broad, rich topic based curriculum both indoors and outdoors. The seven areas of learning and experience, ages and stages, and the Early Learning Goals now provide a National Framework for planning, teaching and assessing.

### The Seven Areas of Learning

The seven areas of learning covered by the framework are:

#### **PRIME AREA:** Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)

This area has three sub sections. These are Making Relationships, Self-confidence and Self-awareness and Managing Feelings and Behaviour. The outcomes focus on children learning how to work, play, co-operate with others and function in a group beyond the family. They cover important aspects of personal, social, moral and spiritual development including the development of personal values and an understanding of self and others.

#### **PRIME AREA:** Communication and Language (CL)

This is broken down into three sub sections. These cover Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking. These outcomes cover important aspects of language development and provide the foundations for literacy. The Early Years Policy places a strong emphasis on children developing competence in speaking and listening and Understanding. Other areas of learning also make a vital contribution to the successful development of literacy.

#### **PRIME AREA:** Physical Development (PD)

This covers both fine and gross motor development and keeping healthy. Physical development is implicit in all areas of the EYFS framework. Teaching concentrates on children developing physical control, mobility, awareness of space and manipulative skills in indoor and outdoor environments. Positive attitudes are encouraged towards a healthy and active way of life.

**SPECIFIC AREA: Mathematics (M)**

This is broken down into two sub sections. These are Number and Shape, Space and Measures. These outcomes cover important aspects of mathematical understanding and provide the foundation for Mathematics. They focus on achievement through practical activities and are using and understanding language in the development of simple mathematical ideas.

**SPECIFIC AREA: Literacy (L)**

This area of learning has two sub sections of Reading and Writing. The objectives ensure success in early reading and writing skills. Phonics plays a big part in this area and the ability to blend for reading and segment for spelling are skills that are promoted daily in Foundation Stage at Brookside Primary School.

**SPECIFIC AREA: Understanding the World (UW)**

This covers the subjects Geography, Science, DT, History, RE and ICT. This is a major area of learning and enquiry focusing on children developing knowledge and understanding of their environment, other people and features of the natural and made world.

**SPECIFIC AREA: Expressive Arts and Design (CD)**

This covers art, music, and drama. This area of the EYFS framework focuses on the development of children's imagination and their ability to communicate and to express ideas and feelings in creative ways.

## **Characteristics of Effective Learning**

The characteristics of effective learning describe factors which play a central role in a child's learning and in becoming an effective learner. They are vital elements of support for the transition process from EYFS to Year 1. The characteristics of learning run through and underpin all seven areas of learning and development, representing processes rather than outcomes. Information describing the child's characteristics of effective learning will provide Year 1 teachers with vital background and context when considering the child's next stage of development and future learning needs.

### **Playing and exploring – Engagement**

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

### **Active learning – Motivation**

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

### **Creating and thinking critically – Thinking**

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

## Admissions and Induction

Brookside Primary School provides full-time Early Years education for children in the Reception Year. This is for children who enter school from September of the academic year in which they will turn five years old. Before they start at school, all children are offered a series of visits during the Summer Term. The purpose of these initial visits is for the children to meet their new practitioners and start to become familiar with the environment. Practitioners will also go to visit some children in their current setting if appropriate. The aim of these visits is to support practitioners develop their knowledge and understanding of each child in order to make the transition period to Brookside Primary School as smooth as possible.

In the Summer Term parents are invited into school to meet the Reception practitioners at the welcome meeting. At this meeting information regarding the induction process is shared. There is also time for informal chat and parents' questions. School information packs will be distributed to parents at this meeting, detailing school routines and expectations. The Family Liaison member of staff contacts all families and encourages them to have a tour around school, helps parents to fill in paperwork and answers any questions they may have.

Home visits are offered to all families. During the first week of the Autumn Term, practitioners make home visits to those who have requested one. The following week, children attend school on a part time basis as part of their induction. Every effort is made to make children feel safe, secure and happy. There is a relaxed and open ethos in the setting; routines are established and a calm atmosphere is developed. During the part time week, all children attend three morning sessions and stay for lunch, and two afternoon sessions. The following week, the children will begin full time hours. Parents and/or teachers may request for a child to remain part time for a longer period of time.

## Structure

Reception are known at Brookside as 'The Butterflies' and are divided into two classes, the Red Admirals and the Holly Blues. Each class has up to thirty children. There is one intake at the start of the academic year and children spend one year in Reception before moving on to Year 1. We are based in a large open planned classroom. Some lessons are taught in class groups, but others are taught in differentiated groups from across the cohort. During free flow times (known as busy time), practitioners work with and make observations of all children, regardless of which class they are in.

Our Reception team is made up of two Teachers, two Nursery Nurses and one Learning Support Assistant. The school day begins at 8.50am and we ask parents to wait on the veranda or in the playground with their child until we open the doors. Home time is 3.10pm, parents wait on the veranda until the doors are opened then come into the classroom to collect their child. The Reception team are usually available to talk to, both before and after school, if the need arises.

Parents must let us know if someone different will be collecting their child. We will not let a child go home with someone we do not know, if we have not been informed. Children in Reception must be collected by an adult or a young person over the age of 16.

If parents need to collect or bring their child to school at other times i.e. if they are late, or have a doctor's appointment etc, then they *must* go via the office and register them there, BEFORE coming across to the classroom. Children arriving after 9.10am will be classed as late.

## **The Learning Environment**

The Reception base is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, quiet, creative etc. Our classroom has defined learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Reception has an enclosed outdoor area, and at specific times during the week, children are able to free-flow between the indoor and outdoor spaces. Being outdoors offers the children opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. They are able to explore, use their senses, develop their language skills and be physically active. We plan activities and resources both inside and outside enabling the children to develop in all the areas of learning.

## **Planning**

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Outcomes are covered throughout the academic year. After running child led planning for a number of years, the decision was taken in 2013 to move to a fixed long term plan to ensure better curriculum coverage and more opportunities to link learning. We recognise the need to continue to follow the children's interests and this will form the basis of our continuous provision.

Long term planning was created to ensure a good range of topics are covered and that these would lead to a natural progression for children as they enter into Year 1. Medium term planning involves all Early Years practitioners and takes into account the developmental needs of groups of children in the cohort. On top of this we plan intervention groups for children who need extra support to achieve their potential, these groups include gifted and able, language support, social skills, meaningful movement and any other needs which arise during the year.

All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities both indoors and outdoors whenever possible. Educational visits within the local community and further afield are also planned to support children's learning within the classroom.

## **Observation and Assessment**

On-going assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS at Brookside Primary School. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept on Target Tracker and this enables us to closely monitor the progress of the cohort, individuals and groups.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis and are recorded in different formats (e.g. photographs and learning journey entries, stickers, whole class grids, annotated planning). All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests, play schemas and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children in their next steps of learning. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS setting include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work and talking with children about their task or play.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all the areas of learning and development in the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are recorded, along with photographic evidence and observations to form a Learning Journey which is shared with parents throughout the year.

Assessments are carried out during the first few weeks of the autumn term and together with progress summary assessments from former settings, children are given an on-entry level in all areas of the curriculum. These levels will be used as a starting point for planning. On-entry judgements are moderated with other schools in the development group. Throughout the year there is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the Early Learning Outcomes age bands. During the summer term, practitioners assess children using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. All practitioners contribute to the EYFSP, but the class teachers make the final judgements. These judgements are quality assured by the Head Teacher. At Brookside we work closely with our development group to ensure moderation of judgements.

## **Parents as Partners**

At Brookside Primary School we recognise the importance of establishing positive relationships with parents, as highlighted by the EYFS framework. We understand that an effective partnership between school and home will have a positive impact on children's learning and development. Practitioners endeavour to encourage the regular sharing of information about children with parents. We value the role of parents as children's primary educators. The setting has a friendly, open-door policy and parents are always welcomed into school and encouraged to discuss and concerns they might have.

Through informal chats at the beginning and end of the day and the 'All About Me' induction booklet at the beginning of term, practitioners encourage parents to share their unique knowledge of their child, providing further insight into the child as an individual (e.g. characteristics, interests, experiences, likes, dislikes).

Parents are kept informed of what is happening in the setting through regular letters, information in the cloakrooms, reading records and informal chatting at the beginning and end of the day. We have class page on the school website, which is updated weekly with photographs of the children, activities, learning experiences, letters and ways to consolidate the learning at home. It is an ideal way for working parents who are not regularly able to come into the classroom to stay informed. We encourage Parents to ring school with any concerns or queries if they do not bring or collect their child. Practitioners will also ring parents to maintain close links.

Parents are invited to attend two parent teacher interviews during the course of the academic year. Other opportunities for practitioners to share children's learning, development and well-being with parents include Learning Journeys, written reports and Celebration assemblies where children's achievements are recognised.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents are invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work and special events such as Father's Day and Celebration days.

Parents are invited in to school throughout the year to attend and take part in various sessions planned to give them a greater understanding of the curriculum. For example, phonics for reading, phonics for writing, gross and fine motor skills and mathematics. These sessions may vary depending on the needs of the cohort. We work closely with the school nurse team to provide support for parents. We also target particular groups of children with needs identified through observations and assessment and provide extra sessions for parents, for example Meaningful Movement and Family Learning. Family Learning is run alongside a Family Learning tutor.

## **Inclusion**

We value the diversity of all children and their families within our school. All children at Brookside Primary School are treated fairly whatever their race, gender, religion or abilities. We believe that all our children matter and give them every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

In Reception we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding are in advance of their language and communication skills;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary.

## **Equal Opportunities**

All practitioners at Brookside Primary School have a responsibility to maintain positive attitudes to diversity and difference, ensuring that inclusive practice is delivered in the EYFS setting. All children, irrespective of gender, ability, ethnicity, culture or religion, and social circumstances, have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development within the EYFS setting at Brookside Primary School.

*See Equal Opportunities Policy for more information.*

## **Special Educational Needs**

Continual informal and formal assessments undertaken by practitioners provide opportunities to identify any special educational needs a child may have. As children all develop differently it is recognised that a significant lack of progress after the initial settling in period represents a cause for concern and we will begin careful monitoring. If we continue to have concerns, it is our policy to raise these with parents early on in the academic year in order to work together to assist the child. If the child continues to make little or no progress we will liaise with parents and the SENCO. Advice may be sought from other agencies e.g. Speech and Language Therapy Service. We will also begin an IEP to provide additional support. For children who arrive at the setting with identified special needs or significant concerns we will liaise with parents, pre-school providers and outside agencies to support the child. We will then follow school procedures in liaison with the SENCO.

*See Special Educational Needs Policy.*

## **Safeguarding**

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns practitioners have will be recorded and passed to the Headteacher and if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance.

*See Safeguarding Policy for more information.*

**Data will be processed to be in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation**