

The aims of this policy are:

- To make explicit the principles we adhere to, and those outlined in ‘Early Years Foundation Stage’ also referred to as EYFS, which became statutory in 2012 following the Tickell review (2011)
- To outline the provision made for children in the Foundation Stage of our school;
- To show links to other whole school policies

Principles

The Early Years Foundation Stage covers the first 5 years of a child’s life, and all the vital learning that takes place in this time, both within a ‘setting’ and out of it; this includes learning that takes place within a child’s own home, family and community before the child enters a ‘setting’ such as playgroup, nursery or school. The Foundation Stage is based upon a set of principles, which can be read in full in ‘Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, Outcomes and Development Matters’ (2013). These four themes are:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and Development

This document recognises the importance of Parents and Carers as children’s **“first and most enduring educators”** and emphasise the vital nature of working in partnership with families.

At Brunswick Park Primary School, we consider the Foundation Stage to be an essential part of a child’s education, and place a high value on children’s experiences with us between the ages of 3 (when they enter Nursery) and 5 years, as they leave Reception and join Year 1; indeed, we extend children’s Foundation Stage experiences into Year 1 where necessary, recognising that many children need to continue with a carefully planned, play-based curriculum as they prepare for the requirements of Key Stage One; sensitive transitions are planned throughout the Foundation Stage and into Year 1 in order to best support children’s individual learning needs. This flexibility is based on the principle identified in the document ‘Excellence and Enjoyment’ (QCA, 2003) as a ‘planned and existing freedom’, whereby children may be taught from ‘earlier or later programmes of study’ to best meet learning needs.

Our intentions are:

- to support children’s development into eager, confident and curious lifelong learners, equipped with the skills, knowledge and attributes they will need to access learning throughout their lives;
- to encourage them to form trusting friendships with their peers and with adults in school;
- to develop strong and healthy bodies and a love of play;
- to know that they are valued and loved, both as individuals and as part of our school community.

Organisation

The Early Years curriculum is devised into seven areas of learning; three PRIME areas and four SPECIFIC areas

1. *Personal, Social and Emotional Development (Prime)*
2. *Communication and Language (Prime)*
3. *Physical Development (Prime)*
4. *Literacy (Specific)*
5. *Mathematics (Specific)*
6. *Understanding the World (Specific)*
7. *Expressive Arts and Design (Specific)*

All areas of learning are important, but it is recognised that careful consideration is given to ***Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language and Physical Development*** (the three Prime Areas) when planning in all areas; it is considered that good opportunities for learning and development in these three developmentally sensitive areas are a pre-requisite for learning in the others; additionally, the 2006 ICAN report '**The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication**' indicates that **"in some areas more than 50% of children enter school with transient language or communication difficulties; 'Transient' means 'not lasting or remaining'. If these children get the right support they are likely to catch up"** (DCSF, 2008, Supporting Children with speech, language and communication needs: Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage). All areas must be planned for, but such planning should demonstrate opportunities to develop prime areas and teach Specific skills through them. The areas of learning are interconnected with, and supported by, the 3 Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL); Playing and exploring (engagement); Active learning (motivation); and Creating and thinking critically (thinking). 'Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, Outcomes and Development Matters' states that the characteristics **"underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner"** (Crown copyright 2013).

Planning

Planning starts from children's developmental levels and areas of interest. Practitioners in the Nursery spend the first 2 -4 weeks in September and sometimes January if we admit in Spring term (the settling-in period) by observing children's interactions and their self-chosen play; activities are planned around children's immediate interests and include opportunities to develop and extend skills. Once children are settled, planning can then be organised into topics or themes, which are developmental and progressive from Nursery throughout Reception.

Learning intentions are organised into termly topics, finalised by the Assistant Head for EYFS/KS1 but with contributions and suggestions from all staff; these topics are open-ended and include seasonal opportunities and events.

The EYFS year group teams meet weekly to plan, evaluate and moderate; during planning sessions, medium-term plans are further broken down into weekly or fortnightly short-term plans, based around children's needs and interests. High quality texts are used as a starting point.

Assessment and record-keeping (including observations)

Observations in the EYFS form the basis of continuous and rigorous assessment; observations are planned for, with a 'focus' group of children selected each week as observation targets. Our aim is that each group of children will be included in a planned, focussed observation cycle once per half term, such observations to include 'long focussed observations' and short, sticker type observations across several areas of learning. These observations then feed in to the planning cycle by further identifying children's interests and the 'Next Steps' and skills they need to develop to move their learning on; 'Next Steps' are identified individually and when children are developmentally ready; there is no fixed requirement or limitation on when to set 'Next Steps'.

Developmental stages are broken down into 5 overlapping age bands, from Birth – 60 months; this is to reflect the normative curve, whereby children of the same chronological age may have reached different stages of development in a given area, and should not be used lightly to indicate that children are underperforming; however, the developmental stages CAN be used as a general guide to where most children of a given age might be; in this way, they can be used to identify where further support might be necessary, or if a child is consistently falling below the developmental expectation of their chronological age band, perhaps indicating something atypical in their individual development.

All observations are kept in individual Learning Journey folders; at Brunswick Park, we base our Learning Journeys on the A3 sheet format suggested by Southwark, with adaptations made to suit our cohort.

This includes an initial assessment made following a child's first few weeks in Nursery or Reception; general termly assessments; and finally, the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) in a child's final half-term in Reception. **THIS SHOULD BE BASED ON OBSERVATIONS MADE BY THE PRACTITIONERS IN THE ENVIRONMENT, WITH EMPHASIS ON CHILDREN'S INDEPENDENT, SELF-CHOSEN PLAY; NO 'FALSE TESTING' SITUATIONS SHOULD BE SET UP.**

Staffing and resources

In September 2016, the staffing structure is likely to be:

- 4 fte class- based teachers
- 3 full-time Nursery Nurses (2 in Nursery, 1 in Reception)
- 3 Teaching Assistants of Level 3 equivalency (1 in Nursery, 2 in Reception)
- 3 Teaching Assistants of Level 3 equivalency to support additional needs (initially based in Reception)

We are mindful of the ratios and qualification levels set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework; careful adjustments take place whenever necessary to ensure that the minimum ratios and qualifications are maintained.

Budget allocation

The Assistant Head for EYFS/KS1 has responsibility for the budget allocated by the school, but consults with staff when making decisions about how the budget is spent. The AH is guided by the School Development Plan and the Subject development Plan when making decisions about budget expenditure. Where possible, a separate 'year group' budget is allocated for each class, so that practitioners have access to funds for any particular class needs or spontaneous opportunities. (Shopping trips, Art materials, etc)

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Partnership with Parents and Carers

The EYFS makes explicit the requirements to work in partnership with Parents and other significant people in children's lives; we value contributions from parents and families and enable this in the following ways:

- At registration, parents are given an individual appointment where they are helped to complete paperwork by a member of staff; at this point, they can visit the EYFS classrooms if they wish, accompanied at all times by a member of staff
- When an offer of a Nursery place is made, families are also offered a Home Visit; 2 members of staff carry out a short, informal visit (20 minutes or so) in order to say hello to their child, gather information on the child's likes and dislikes (as a start to their Learning Journey), and answer any questions that the parent may have at this point
- Nursery children have an individual timetable for settling in and parents/carers are expected and actively encouraged to stay with their child for short periods
- 'Stay and Play' – new Reception families are invited to visit school at the beginning of term, to meet with the Head Teacher and other staff, and to visit their child's class 'in action' for a short time.
- A 'Parent's Notice board' in Nursery for changing information and a photo display to share curriculum information, including photos and captions of learning opportunities
- Regular meetings (both formal and informal) including daily chats with staff, and Parent Evenings for specific issues
- Registration of parents/carers on ParentMail
- Children joining our Reception classes from other settings are offered either a setting visit or a Home Visit
- On transfer to Reception classes, all children are offered a careful phased admission period, giving us the chance to meet new families and settle children calmly

Links with other agencies

We have strong links with other agencies including

- The Grove Nursery School
- Nell Gwyn Nursery School
- Ann Bernadt Nursery School
- Aylesbury Early Years centre
- Community Police Officers

These developments will continue, and we work in close partnership with the Local authority in matters of Health and Child Protection. **(Please see Safeguarding Children Policy)**