

Blacko Primary School

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Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

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AGREED BY GOVERNORS:

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– unless any statutory updates

POLICY

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Our Mission Statement

Our aim is to provide a happy, pleasant and stimulating environment where relationships between all members of the community - children and adults - are based on mutual trust, understanding and respect. The family feel of our school helps each child to develop his/her own personality in a secure and caring environment where we are mindful that toleration and respect of others are necessary attributes in a civilised society.

Introduction

At Blacko, we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

As outlined in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS):

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.’

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy: Admissions Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy; Behaviour Policy; Parents as Partners Policy; Key Person.

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years settings.

- 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 practitioners and parents and/or carers
- Children **develop and learn** in different ways and at different rates.

Principles into Practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning (listed below), using child-based play as the vehicle for learning
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context
- Plan challenging learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment
- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult
- Have a key person approach to develop close relationships with individual children
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out

Curriculum, Teaching & Learning

The first stage of the National Curriculum is called The Foundation Stage. It begins when children enter Nursery and continue until the end of the Reception year. The Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting and fostering the children's personal, social and emotional wellbeing. It encourages positive attitudes and dispositions towards learning in the children.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve and exceed the early learning goals.

All seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

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 are the **prime** areas:

- **Communication and Language (CL)**
- **Physical Development (PD)**
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)**

Children are also supported through the four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

The **specific** areas are:

- **Literacy (L)**
- **Mathematics (M)**
- **Understanding the World (UW)**
- **Expressive Arts and Design (EAD)**

Teaching and Learning in the Foundation Stage is based on an understanding of how children learn.

Children learn best through:

- play
- first-hand experiences which are well structured and meaningful
- interacting with others in a cognitive and reflective way
- being physically active
- having their interests valued, developed and extended.

Children are provided with a range of rich, meaningful first-hand experiences in which children explore, think creatively and are active. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

As a team, we write long term, medium term and short term plans using the EYFS based on a series of topics each of which offers experiences in all seven areas. These plans are reviewed by the Headteacher. These plans then inform our short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remains flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses. Please see our plans for more details, which are available upon request.

Children have whole group and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session using the scheme 'Phonics Bug' which is supplemented with activities from other various phonics schemes as necessary to support pupil learning and development, teaching aspects of Mathematics and Literacy, including shared reading and writing.

The curriculum is delivered using a child-initiated, play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS. 'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities'

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

In planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect as practitioners on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice.

We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between inside and out.

The seven areas of learning and how we promote them with children are detailed below;

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The school fosters and develops relationships between home, school, children's centres and places of worship in order to make links stronger for the good of the community as a whole. Children are encouraged to learn to work, share, take turns and co-operate with others. They are encouraged to be independent and make choices for themselves. They are also encouraged to be sensitive to the needs of others and to respect other cultures and beliefs. Children are enabled to become confident and develop a positive self-image.

Physical Development

Children are given opportunities to move to music, use equipment, develop and practice their fine and gross motor skills. They develop an increased understanding of how their body works and what is needed to be healthy. This is carried out in both indoor and outdoors and by working with a wide range of resources.

Communication and Language

This covers all aspects of language development and provides the foundation for literacy skills. Children's developing competence in speaking and listening is focused on. We aim to extend and enrich the children's vocabulary through story time, rhymes, role-play and group discussions. Children are encouraged to share their own experiences through speaking and acting out events in imaginative play and talking about their own ideas. They are encouraged to take part in class activities such as working with puppets, participating in music sessions and saying rhymes and singing songs together.

Literacy

We have a variety of resources for the children to use to help them develop early literacy skills. Children are encouraged to use the mark-making areas indoors and outdoors independently but they also take part in teacher-led activities. These activities include whole class shared reading, phonics sessions and small group guided reading and writing. The pre-writing work encourages correct pencil control, left/right orientation and cursive letter formation. Children have the opportunity to develop their writing skills in accordance with their age, ability and competence.

We encourage children to treat books and other resources with respect and they are given many opportunities to listen to stories told by the staff.

Mathematics

We aim for children to achieve mathematical understanding and a firm foundation for numeracy through practical activities and using and understanding the language in the development of simple mathematical ideas. Pre-number work is covered through nursery rhymes and number activities. Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. Towards the end of the Foundation stage children start learning to tell the time and are given opportunities to learn about money and simple calculations.

Understanding the World

All children are given opportunities to solve problems, investigate, make decisions and experiment. They will learn about living things, their environment, the world around them and the people who are important in their lives. Children are also given opportunities to develop computing skills and to work with and use modern technology.

Expressive Arts and Design

We provide opportunities for all children to explore and share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of art, design, technology, music, drama, movement, dance and imaginative play activities. Children are given opportunities to make paintings, drawings, collages, models and use basic musical instruments. Children also learn new songs and rhymes and enjoy singing them with each other. Colour recognition is taught, naming colours, mixing paints, sorting and matching. Through various times during the year children are given the opportunity to participate in school productions and assemblies.

Assessment

Parents/carers are vital partners in the assessment process. We work alongside parents to complete the child's Entry Profile when the child joins the school. An 'All About Me' booklet is sent home after the initial New Parent's Meeting and this is cross-referenced with an On Entry Booklet when children start reception. These are used to begin the assessment process.

We use the Early Learning Goals to assess the children in the Foundation Stage. These goals were developed to measure progress. They help us plot the individual progress of each child as they grow and develop. As the child progresses through the school the teachers will make judgements based on their observations of the child in all seven areas of learning. The Foundation Stage Profile will be completed for Reception children to assess progress against the Early Learning Goals.

As part of our daily practice, we observe and assess children's development and learning to inform our future plans. We record our observations in a variety of ways. Everyone is encouraged to contribute and discussions take place. Significant observations of children's achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey, which is shared with parents.

Twice per year, parents are invited to attend a parents evening and reports are written and sent to parents at the end of the child's time in Reception. Within this report, we will provide the parents with information based on their child's development against each of the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of their learning. The parents are then given the opportunity to discuss these judgements with their teacher in preparation for Year 1.

Classroom Organisation.

Play is essential for young children's learning. Independent self-initiated learning is supported by a well-resourced provision such as:

- sand and water,
- home corner, role play areas
- writing area
- number area
- attractive book, reading and listening area
- space for small world play
- construction area
- creative area and malleable area
- outdoor area
- topic area
- ICT area

The classroom is well organised and designed to give the children space to move about between the different activities safely and with ease. The teaching is designed to provide a stimulating learning environment inside and outside, with provision arranged into areas for different types of play.

There is a high level of staff involvement in children's activities and play. There are planned 'focused activities' for specific children, or groups of children. However, any child who wishes to join in activity is allowed to do so. Tasks and activities are suitably matched to individual abilities and are organised to meet the learning needs of each child.

There is whole class teaching for **Communication and Language, Literacy** and **Mathematics** aspects of the curriculum. The remaining areas are taught through topic-based sessions.

Observation of the children supports and informs the teaching strategies used in the early years. It helps us understand the children's interests as well as their current skills, knowledge and understanding. We can then base our teaching as well as the actual activities and experiences planned on the results of our observations. We encourage the children to become autonomous and independent by ensuring that the resources and equipment are accessible to them.

Reception staff plan together to ensure continuity for the children's learning across the Foundation Stage.

Resources are stored so that children can access them and put them away. Displays promote, support and reflect children's current interests and are changed frequently to maintain current topics and practice.

Outdoor Provision

In the Reception class children have access to secure outdoor space. This learning environment is set up to support and extend children's learning in all areas of the curriculum.

Parents as Partners and the Wider Context

We strive to create and maintain a partnership with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education and care in numerous ways.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

There are parents meetings twice per year, weekly Stay and Learn sessions and other opportunities for parents to find out about how their child is getting on at school and pass on information about their child at home. Parents play a vital role in the education of their children. For the first few weeks in September, ~~term~~, parents are encouraged to bring their child into the classroom at the start of the day, when staff are available for informal discussions with you. After the first few weeks, children are encouraged to be more independent at coming into school but the class teacher is still available upon request. At any point, parents can also make an appointment to meet with the class teachers at a mutually convenient time to discuss any concerns you may have.

Parents Evenings are held twice a year, one in the Autumn Term, one in the-Spring Term, where the child's progress and next steps are discussed.

We encourage parents to understand that it is vital to read with their child regularly at home as this, more than anything else, helps them develop educationally. Looking at the pictures and talking about them helps stimulate the child's thinking. It also gives them a love of books which they carry all through their life.

Evidence shows that children who love books do better in school than children who don't value books.

Snack Times

We see snack time as a social event, a time where the children enjoy a drink of milk, piece of fruit and/or a light snack together. This time of day is the ideal opportunity to develop and enhance the children's social skills and to encourage interaction and conversation with their peers as they sit together. It also develops independence as the children are encouraged to serve themselves and wash up their own plate.

Transitions

Transitions from the Nursery settings to our school or from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 (Reception to Year 1) are carefully planned for and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child and other settings, including nurseries and child-minders.

Once primary school places are secured, parents are invited to a 'Welcome Evening' where they can find out all of the key information they need about starting school. Both the EYFS Lead and the EYFS Teacher visit each child's Nursery setting to meet their Key Worker, gather an understanding of each child individually and to spend some time with each child in a familiar setting. Before children start school, they are invited to attend four introductory sessions to develop familiarity with the setting and practitioners. They also receive a small booklet to complete on 'All About Me', this helps the practitioners to know more about each child and plan activities to help them settle.

In the final term of Reception, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals, to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children. Children spend more time working with the Year 1 children to help them feel more settled about the move to Class 2 in September.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Blacko, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and support them at their own pace so that most of our children achieve and even exceed the Early Learning Goals. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies. *See our Single Equality Act and the SEND Policy.*

Equal Opportunities

We ensure all children feel included and supported by working in an anti-discriminatory way. We regularly monitor our provision to ensure every child's learning is well supported and builds on children's own home, cultural and linguistic background. We use materials, equipment and displays which reflect the home languages, the cultural and ethnic diversity of the children, the local community and wider world.

We work towards supporting bilingual children's development in their home language as well as English. We ensure that bilingual children have access to the full curriculum and are involved in all the learning experiences offered to give the extra support needed so that they can participate and understand. Children will be learning English through real life, everyday, meaningful experiences and through interacting with other children and staff.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Procedures

It is important to identify those children who find some areas of learning difficult so that strategies to help them can be put in place as soon as possible. These children will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which is written by the teacher in consultation with the parent and the SEND coordinator. This will be reviewed regularly as the child progresses. SEND children to have access to the full curriculum and are involved in all the learning experiences. Extra support is also available if required. *Please see our SEND Policy, SEND Local Offer or SEND Information Report for further information.*

Allergies / Medical Needs

It is the responsibility of a child's parents/carers to ensure that the school is kept up to date with their child's medical needs. Parents/carers are asked to inform the school of any foods their children are allergic to or any foods they do not wish their child to eat. A note of this is kept in the kitchen area and all adults involved are informed.

We keep a register of any medical needs, allergies, children who need inhalers, piriton, epi-pens in the Reception class, staffroom and the office area so everyone is aware of the individual needs. At least two staff members are trained in paediatric first aid.

Please see our Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy for further information.

Safety

Children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of nutritious food, following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident.

The school takes its child protection responsibilities very seriously. Any concerns, which the school has, will be noted and, if deemed necessary, will be reported to the relevant agency. The safety of the child is always of paramount importance.

Please see our separate policies and procedures on Health and Safety, Safeguarding.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow this policy. The Assistant Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring system, in coordination with the Head Teacher and the Governing Body.

The EYFS Policy, procedures and effectiveness are discussed termly at Curriculum Governing Body committee meetings.

The work of the Assistant Headteacher also involves supporting colleagues in the EYFS, being informed about current developments in the EYFS phase and subjects, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Assistant Headteacher gives the Headteacher an annual summary in which s/he evaluates strengths and weaknesses in the EYFS and indicates areas for further improvement. The Headteacher allocates regular management time to the Assistant Headteacher so that s/he can review samples of children's work and undertake lesson observations of teaching across the phase.