



# **Newbridge Primary School**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

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Date written: April 2017  
Date Reviewed: October 2017  
Review date: October 2020 (every 3 years)

## **Newbridge Primary School Foundation Stage Policy**

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 policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at Newbridge Primary School. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of practitioners working in the EYFS setting, including both teaching and non-teaching adults.

### **Aims of the Foundation Stage**

In the EYFS setting at Newbridge 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 aim to support each child's welfare. Learning and developmental needs by:

- Recognising that all children are unique and special.
- Understanding that children develop in individual ways and varying rates physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and emotionally.
- Providing a safe, secure and caring environment where children feel happy and know that they are valued by the practitioners looking after them
- Fostering and nurturing children's self confidence and self-esteem through their developing awareness of their own identity and role within the community
- Teaching them to express and communicate their needs and feelings in appropriate ways.
- Encouraging children's independence and decision-making; supporting them to learn from their mistakes.
- Developing children's understanding of social skills and the values and codes of behaviour required for people to work together harmoniously.
- Supporting children to develop care and respect and to appreciate others, including those with beliefs, cultures and opinions differing from their own.
- Understanding the importance of play in children's learning and development. Providing learning experiences in play that reflect children's personal interests and areas of curiosity in order to encourage and develop their natural desire, interest, excitement and motivation to learn.
- Providing experiences which build on children's existing knowledge and understanding in order to challenge, stimulate and extend their learning and development.
- Providing effective learning opportunities in a range of environments, inside and outside.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage framework**

**The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** applies to children from birth to five years of age. The final year of the EYFS is referred to as the reception year. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.) At Newbridge Primary we are committed to underpinning our provision with the four distinct but complimentary themes of the Early Years Foundation Stage in our Reception Classes. A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development.

#### **A Unique Child**

Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. These commitments are focused around development, inclusion, safety, and health and well being.

- At Newbridge we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways, at different rates and this is reflected in our provision.
- The characteristics of effective learning support the child to become a motivated and effective learner.
- Children will **play and explore and 'have a go'** at using available resources; developing their experiences. Children will develop resilience and enjoy achievements through **active learning** and will make links, explore their ideas and strategies for problem solving through **creating and thinking critically**.
- Practitioners support the children in developing all these characteristics through playing alongside children and, where necessary, scaffolding and supporting their thoughts.
- Children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion, gender or abilities. We welcome all children and families into our setting so that they feel included, safe and valued.
- It is important to us that all children at Newbridge are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them to develop these important life skills. We believe children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and void hazards, both within school and the wider environment. We encourage a healthy lifestyle including taking exercise and eating healthy food.

### **Positive Relationships**

How children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person. These commitments are focused around respect, partnership with parents; supporting learning: and the role of the key person.

- We aim to promote positive relationships between staff, parents and children.
- Children are taught how to deal with difficult situations and relationships through the SEAL curriculum (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) as well as through their daily interactions with adults and other children.
- We recognise that parents are the first educators and their importance for the child's welfare and education is paramount.

### **Environment**

In the EYFS at Newbridge Primary School we recognise the importance of a rich learning environment both inside and outside.

- The environment is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.
- There are a number of outdoor spaces which have a positive effect on the children's development.
- Given the opportunity to work outdoors allows the children to learn things in different ways and on different scales. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant.
- We observe the children during CIL (child initiated learning) and offer additional resources and support to enrich their learning.
- To ensure we meet the individual needs of all of our children we make regular observations of the children's interactions, interests, skills and development of concepts. These observations are used to inform our planning for groups of children, for individuals and our provision for resources as appropriate.

## **Learning and development**

There are seven areas of Learning and Development which are interconnected. Three areas (the prime areas) are crucial to develop lifelong learning and help children to form relationships.

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development – children develop confidence and self-esteem, learn how to manage feelings and respect others.
- Communication and Language – children have opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations and experience a rich language environment.
- Physical Development – children have opportunities to be active and develop coordination (both gross motor and fine motor); they learn about healthy choices.

The prime areas are strengthened and applied through four specific areas:

- Literacy – Involves children learning how letters link to the sounds and begin to read and write.
- Mathematics – children have opportunities to develop counting and calculation skills, to use numbers in everyday activities and recognise and describe shapes and measures.
- Understanding the World – children have opportunities to find out about people and communities, the environment and technology.
- Expressive Arts and Design- involves exploring feelings and ideas through music, dance, role play and design.

The fundamental British values of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs are already implicitly embedded in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **Active Learning through Play**

At Newbridge Primary School we recognise that young children learn best through being active. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve the children for sustained periods. Therefore, we believe that Early Years education should be as practical as possible and our EYFS has an ethos of learning through play. We recognise the importance of children's play. It is an essential and rich part of their learning process, supporting them in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of skills and concepts.

In the EYFS at Newbridge Primary School practitioners provide both structured and unstructured play opportunities inside and outside. These activities are designed to engage children in practical, first-hand experiences which will support children to discover, explore, investigate, develop their personal interests and areas of curiosity, and help to make sense of the world around them as they begin to understand specific concepts. Play opportunities are also set up to provide children with opportunities to apply newly acquired knowledge, demonstrating their skills and levels of understanding.

In providing these active learning opportunities through play we understand the central position of play within the EYFS framework.

This is essentially a play based curriculum and pedagogy as the provision of play opportunities underpins its delivery within settings.

## **Assessment and Record Keeping**

Ongoing assessment is an essential aspect of the effective running of the EYFS setting at Newbridge Primary School. Regular, planned and focused assessments are made of the children's learning and individual needs. A record of each child's progress in all areas of their learning is kept by and filing their assessment data. 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 (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. Observations are recorded in different formats e.g. narrative style, post-it notes, whole class grids, photographs. 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 to make next steps and progress. Other methods of assessing children in the EYFS include engaging alongside children in their play, annotation of children's written work, talking with children about their task or play and in Learning Journey Books.

Learning Journeys record children's progress over the academic year in all Areas of Learning and Development of the EYFS framework. Samples of children's work are gathered (from school and home), along with photographic evidence and observations. There is continuous monitoring and assessment of each child's development using the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (2012) and our identified key skills from 'The Newbridge Journey' (School Curriculum). At the end of the year it provides a summary of every child's development and learning achievements. Baseline assessment is carried out using the EYFS profile during the children's first six weeks upon entering the school. Judgements made on children's development in the profile are based on practitioner's evidence of children's behaviour observed independently and consistently in their self-initiated activities across all areas of Learning and Development. These Baseline assessments are recorded and the children's progress is tracked throughout the year using an online tracking system. At the end of the year EYFS statutory profiles are completed.

## **Planning**

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year. Medium term planning is created with all early years practitioners' involvement and takes into account the individual children's learning and developmental needs.

Children and parents are encouraged to be involved in the next steps for learning through the children's learning journey books and parent consultations.

Child-initiated learning is an important part of our daily routine at Newbridge and whenever possible adult-directed activities are play based, active and related to the children's interests.

## **Parents as Partners**

We believe that all parents have an important role to play in the education of their child. We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating their children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents/carers about their child before their child starts in our school
- Inviting all parents/carers to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- Inviting parents/carers to a 'Welcome Evening'
- Operating an 'open door' policy whereby parents/carers can come and discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner

- Informal chats at the beginning and end of the day
- Inviting parents/carers to help in school
- Encouraging parents/carers to listen to their child read regularly and to comment using the Reading Record Book.
- Encouraging parents/carers to complete 'WOW' sheets to celebrate home achievements
- Activities at home packs provide support for parents/carers to support learning through activities to support the curriculum and ensuring that experiences at home are used to develop learning in school
- Discussing individual targets with parents/carers at parents' evening (informed by the EYFS profile) and by providing written feedback on progress and next steps
- Providing an annual written report to parents/carers in July summarising the child's progress against the early learning goals
- Inviting parents/carers to share children's 'Learning Journey' books throughout the year
- Inviting parents/carers to class assemblies and shared learning sessions
- Inviting parent/carers to information/workshop sessions/evenings throughout the year

### **Key person**

The key person approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners. At Newbridge the key person is the Early Years class teacher, their role is to meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. In addition they will work in close partnership with the class teaching assistants.

### **Liaison with pre-school settings and induction**

We are continuing to look at ways to engage with the many pre-school providers that children attend prior to coming to Newbridge Primary. These numbers vary from year to year. We liaise with pre-school providers and parents by:

- the HT and Phase Leader visiting as many providers during the summer term as practical on a rolling timetable
- sharing transfer records from pre-school settings that inform reception practitioners about the new intake
- reception teachers visiting as many pre-school children in their setting as practical
- inviting pre-school providers into school during the first term to visit children
- inviting pre-school providers to use some of the schools' resources e.g. conservation area and learning resources area
- inviting providers and children to forthcoming events
- hosting joint events with preschool providers
- home visits to be arranged as necessary
- visits may be made to settings where appropriate by the school SENCO
- prospective parents having a tour of the school and visiting during open afternoons

- during the summer term, preschool children, who will be starting school, make visits to the reception classes for play and stay sessions with their parent/carers and a session on their own

### **Starting School**

At Newbridge Primary we provide an effective transition programme to support all children starting school. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, our policy is that all children starting in the Foundation Stage will be full time at the school by at least the end of Term 1. We believe this to be in the best interests of the children at our school as many important foundations for relationships and learning are developed during their first year in school. However, we are aware that children react differently to change and new experiences and we are sensitive to the needs of individuals by:

- Asking parents to follow a four week induction timetable in September:  
The children are divided into two smaller groups for the first two weeks, they come to school either mornings and lunch or afternoons and swap over in week two.  
In the third week the children all meet together for the mornings and lunch.  
In the fourth week they all attend three full days and two half days.
- Giving parents the opportunity to discuss their child's transition to school after the induction period.
- A 'drop in' session is planned for parents to have the opportunity to discuss the transition period.
- Extend the induction timetable to the end of Term 1 if necessary.
- Ensuring all staff working in the Foundation Stage will have received appropriate training and qualifications to work with the youngest children in our school.
- Making arrangements for children starting at different times of the year to follow an induction timetable in consultation with the class teacher.

### **Conclusion**

This Early Years Policy will be used to support classroom learning and should be read in conjunction with all relevant policies and guidelines.

This document relates directly to all planning for a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum and to all other documents relating to the curriculum.