

Patcham Infant School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



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Aims of The Early Years Foundation Stage at Patcham Infant School

In our Nursery and Reception classes we aim:-

1. To provide an environment in which each child feels valued, secure and capable of achieving and making progress whilst supported by familiar routines and revisiting favourite activities.
2. To provide a rich and stimulating environment, in which children can enjoy learning, exploring, making connections and discoveries about themselves, others and the world around them, through a wide range of experiences.
3. To provide an environment in which children's play and learning are supported, challenged, extended and facilitated through skilful and appropriate adult intervention.
4. To provide an environment in which each child's interests, achievements and progress are valued and taken into account.
5. To provide an environment and ethos in which children's independence in initiating play, making choices, finding resources and in managing appropriate self care tasks are encouraged.
6. To offer a range of teaching methods and learning opportunities – child initiated, adult led, adult supported in the indoor and outdoor environments.
7. To work closely with parents, carers and other agencies to become informed and to share information about the children's well being and learning.

Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum

The curriculum is based on The Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance and includes learning opportunities across three prime and four specific areas of learning.

The three prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The four specific areas are:

- Understanding of the World
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Expressive Arts and Design

These areas of learning are offered within the context of the four underlying principles of early years practice:-

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

The following characteristics are intrinsic to learning and teaching in early years and emphasise how children learn:

- Playing and Exploring
- Active Learning
- Creating and Thinking Critically

Teaching and Learning

'In their play children learn at their highest level.' (EYFS Themes and Commitments, DfES 2007)

'All areas of learning and development are equally important and inter connected.' (EYFS Principles into Practice, DfES 2007).

Teaching and learning occurs in a range of contexts:

- whole class teacher led
- adult focus activity with small groups, pairs or individual children as appropriate for their needs
- adult initiated activity which children access and engage in independently
- child led activities with adult participation and involvement
- child initiated independent activity.

Through careful planning we are able to achieve a balance throughout the child's day of self chosen activities and adult led or supported activities. Each learning environment is set up to include play and exploration activities in each area of learning.

Teaching and learning takes place in a range of environments: within the classroom, in the shared classroom, in the outside classroom. All adults in the setting are involved in activities in each of the learning environments during every week.

Teaching and learning are planned within termly themes and 'Big questions'. These are flexible and open ended to allow scope for children's questions, interests and passions to be included.

Observations and assessments of children's learning and progress are used to inform the planning of teaching and learning opportunities for whole class, small group and individual activities. Different needs and learning styles are taken into account.

The Role of Adults

Each adult in the setting is viewed as a:-

- carer - responsible for the children's safety and physical and emotional well being, as well as showing interest in their lives and concerns.
- enabler – setting up play and learning experiences which allow children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- facilitator – 'smoothing the path' when appropriate to help children to achieve.
- challenger – extending and stretching the understanding and skills of children.
- modeller – demonstrating how to do something, setting examples of positive attitudes to experiences, learning, relationships.
- observer – being aware of how children are achieving and developing skills and understanding by observing and by playing with them, being 'tuned in' to the chatter that matters.
- recorder – keeping notes, evidence, assessments of children's learning and progress.
- planner – the class teacher will use information from observations and assessments to consider and put into place 'next steps' for children's learning and development.
- communicator – establishing a comfortable relationship with children and parents and carers, so that information about a child can be shared and valued.

Assessment and observation

Assessments from parents and from the feeder pre schools and nurseries are used as initial guidance when the children begin Nursery. Assessments from parents, our nursery and from the feeder pre schools and nurseries are used as initial guidance when the children enter reception. Information from parents and carers throughout the year is used to contribute to assessment of children's learning.

Formative assessment in the Nursery and Reception

Children's progress and development is assessed and observed as an ongoing operation. Assessments and observations are used to inform planning, both for the year group, class and for individual children. All adults working in the Foundation Stage nursery and reception classes are involved in assessment and observation. A record of progress in the stages of development over each term is compiled by the class teacher.

Judgements about children's learning may be made in two ways:-

- when an adult is working with a group of children or with an individual child during an adult guided activity.
- When an adult is able to observe a child during independent, self chosen or self initiated activity.

Observations of children engaged in self chosen and self initiated activities are undertaken in a variety of ways:-

- Post-it note observations of significant steps in learning and development observed in the inside and outside learning environments, made by all adults in the setting.
- Termly observation of each child are made by the child's class teacher and teaching assistant.
- General observations made by adults in the setting as they play and interact with others
- Annotated photographic evidence of children undertaking an activity.

Summative assessment

A profile of each child's progress and development in the areas of learning is compiled over the course of the Foundation Stage and is recorded in The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile at the end of the child's Reception year.

Final judgements about a child's progress and development are based on observations and assessments made during the Reception year and take account of assessments from our Nursery and from the feeder preschools and nurseries. The profile is compiled

by the class teacher, using information from adults in the setting, parents and carers and other involved agencies. Profile results are moderated by the Reception teaching team and regularly by Early Years consultants from the local authority.

Partnership with parents, carers and other agencies

We believe that a successful partnership with parents and carers is an important part of our practice, which will have a positive impact on teaching and learning. We recognise that parents and carers are the child's first educators and we seek to learn from them about their child and their child's learning out of school, just as we communicate with parents and carers about their child's learning and progress in school and nursery.

Nursery

The nursery teacher and nursery nurse make home visits for each child before they start coming to nursery. We believe that this is a very valuable first step in our partnership with parents and begins an effective two-way communication between home and school. Throughout the year there are a range of opportunities for parents to work in partnership with the nursery e.g. open days, visits from parents to talk about their work, parents help during walks and trips out of school as well as helping during session times, Learning Journey information about topics, themes and big questions is shared, the school website and learning platform, children take the class bear and diary home, so news and events are shared, opportunities for parents, carers or grandparents to watch their children perform, parent consultations and reports.

Parents and carers are invited to comment on their child's time at nursery via the end of year Parent Questionnaire.

Reception

We offer a range of opportunities for parents to feel involved in and informed about their child's experiences in Reception e.g. open days, celebration of learning sessions and assemblies, induction talks and meetings, social /information meeting during the first few weeks, other meetings about specific curricular areas, the website and learning platform, parent consultation meetings, reports about learning and progress, home – school reading diaries, learning journey information, family news wall, class bear and diary. Perhaps, most importantly, is the daily informal contact with parents at the end of the day when the children leave the classrooms to meet their parents and carers, as this is an opportunity to communicate in a more relaxed and informal way. Parents and grandparents are welcomed to come into school to help during a session (in line with CP policy, regular parent helpers will have a current CRB check). Appropriate activities are planned so that their contribution is worthwhile and valued.

Outside agencies are involved in supporting children: initially pre schools and nurseries are contacted so that a two way transfer of information can take place. As appropriate, other agencies may be involved to support specific needs e.g. speech and language, school counsellor, Pre school Special Educational Needs Service.

Transition

In order for our children to feel positive and secure at school, we believe it is very important to make transition to nursery, to school and within the school as smooth and comfortable as possible for children and parents. Since it is often the 'unknown uncertainties' about new situations which are threatening, we have endeavoured to make children and parents feel as informed as possible about all aspects of their new classes.

Information about each child which has been provided by parents or carers or pre school settings is valuable to us and is used to help us make the transition to nursery or reception an easy one for each child.

Starting Nursery

Once a place has been accepted for the nursery, there is an opportunity for children and parents to visit, meet the staff and spend some time playing in the nursery setting. The nursery teacher and nursery nurse arrange home visits, which take place during the first two weeks in September. We have found home visits to be a very valuable experience for the child, the parent/carer and the nursery staff. It gives the child a chance to meet the teacher in the security of his/her own home and it gives parents and carers opportunity to talk confidentially. It also begins the important home-school partnership. Prior to the children starting nursery there is an open day in September for children and parents/carers. This is an informal session in which parents, carers and children can drop in and stay to take part in activities.

The induction process is gradual, so that children can get used to the setting in smaller groups than the whole class.

Reception

We make transition to Reception as seamless as possible by providing many different opportunities for children and parents to become acquainted with us, the setting and environment and with each other. We visit or contact the pre school settings and use the information they provide about each child carefully when organising the classes. We send a book to settings about the school with photographs of different activities and the reception environment. We arrange visits to the classrooms with parents or carers, and visits to and from pre schools. The Teddy Bears' Picnic in July is an opportunity for children, parents, the class teacher and support staff to meet very informally and uses a

different part of the school environment. A special letter from the teacher and class assistant, including a photograph, is sent to each child.

Taster sessions in reception give children an opportunity to visit and meet the small group of children who share the same starting day and it gives parents the opportunity to talk privately with the class teacher should they wish to do so. We have a gradual induction period, which gives each child the opportunity to settle into their new class in a small group and we plan those groups very carefully to ensure that each child starts school with some familiar faces from preschool or other friendship groups.

The children are invited to make a treasure box during the summer holiday of special items to share with their new teacher and class. This has proved to be an important link with home and a very motivating activity which the children have been keen to bring to school to share. Autumn term themes for nursery and reception classes are based on 'Ourselves', which provides great opportunities for establishing early links between home and school e.g. Family News Wall.

Parental views are sought about their child's experience of settling in through a questionnaire. The responses are valued and useful in evaluating and amending our transition processes.

Transition to Year 1 is calm and well organised. There are visits from Year 1 children to talk about some of their favourite activities, visits to the Year 1 classrooms, Year 1 teachers visit Reception classes for story times. Teachers from Reception meet their class's new Year 1 teacher to discuss each child. Very shortly after the start of the Autumn term there are meetings for parents to give information about Year 1 and to meet the class teacher.

Equal Opportunities

The Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance is unequivocal in the importance of an appreciation of 'the unique child'. Therefore, we place great emphasis on developing the children's belief in themselves as learners and achievers. It is the role of the adults in the setting to find out about each child as an individual and ensure that appropriate and meaningful interactions and experiences take place.

We aim to give all children experiences which will develop their understanding of the needs, views, feelings, cultures and beliefs of others and an understanding of what it is to show respect for and consideration of another person.

Every child is supported to make progress and achieve to the best of their ability. Where appropriate, outside agencies may be involved in providing support to allow equality of access to learning e.g. for children with English as an additional language

Disability Equality statement

Patcham Infant School is committed to promoting disability equality and equality of opportunity for pupils with learning difficulties. When planning and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage staff will make reasonable adjustments to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non disabled children. This would include access to the outside and all areas of the school by a ramp in the nursery and stair lift in the main school building.