

Long Buckby Infant School Foundation Stage Policy

1 Introduction

The Foundation Stage applies to children in their pre-school year before they start school, to the end of the reception year. In our school, most children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they turn five. The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, and in preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals (ELG) set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Children joining the school have already learnt a great deal. Many have been to one of a range of settings that exist in our community. The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- it builds on what our children already know and can do;
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;
- it offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- it provides a rich, stimulating and safe environment.

2 Aims and Objectives of the Foundation Stage

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by supporting, fostering, promoting and developing children's:

- personal, social and emotional well-being;
- positive attitudes and dispositions towards their learning;
- social skills;
- attention skills and persistence;
- language and communication;
- reading and writing;
- mathematics;
- understanding of the world around them;
- physical development;
- creative development;
- opportunities to have fun;
- ability to experience and make choices.

3 Teaching and learning style

The schools teaching and learning policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents/carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- the range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;

- the support for learning with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- the identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- the clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do with the children;
- the regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

4 Play in the Foundation Stage

Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children have the opportunity to play both indoors and outdoors. Most children play spontaneously, others need adult support, but it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Children are given the opportunities to play through well planned experiences where the practitioners support the learning, offering challenge through quality open ended questioning.

5 Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school all our children matter. The children are given every opportunity to achieve their best. The school takes account of the children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning (see the school's inclusion policy).

In the Foundation Stage realistic and challenging expectations are set that meet the needs of all children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the foundation stage. Some children progress beyond this point.

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 alongside continuous provision 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 the progress of all children and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

6 The Foundation Stage curriculum

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is based on seven areas of learning and provides continuity with the early stages of the National Curriculum. Each of the seven areas are equally weighted, there is not an emphasis in any particular area.

Opportunities to explore the curriculum are provided inside and outside.

Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Medium term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning objectives to be taught. The staff plan a 'stunning start' to engage the children in a topic and end with a 'fabulous finish'. Topics are based around the interests noted from the children's play. Coverage of skills taught are tracked to ensure there are no gaps.

7 Assessment

Information is received through tracking documents on the children's learning within Development Matters from preschool and nursery. The teaching staff meet with a range of settings to discuss each child before they start school and visit the settings to familiarise themselves with the children.

Regular assessments of children's learning are made, and this information is used to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation (written or photo evidence using a bespoke software programme), and this involves the teacher, teaching assistants, the child themselves and parents/carers.

During the children's early weeks in the reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a personalised baseline assessment. This information is then used to plan for individual children and groups of children. The baseline assessment is used to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort of children. Baseline information is shared with parents at the parental consultation meeting along with individualised targets in October.

An assessment programme, Itrack, is used to record progress in each assessment period and monitor all children. Early intervention/actions can be put in place if needed, to help the children achieve their potential and ultimately the Early Learning Goal's.

Each child has a 'Learning Journey' folder which displays evidence and observations of new and significant learning and experiences. These folders contain a wide range of evidence that staff share with parents throughout the year and both children and parents/carers have opportunities to comment on evidence seen and to add evidence of their own.

Assessment of the children's learning allows their next steps to be planned, both on an on-going basis to help inform the planning and groupings of the children but also to set longer term goals. Parents receive individualised targets for their children that allows them the opportunity to support learning at home.

Parents receive an annual written report that informs them of their child's progress and attainment in each area of learning and contains statements about their characteristics of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. These are sent to parents in July.

At the end of Foundation Stage the teacher completes the profile scores for each Early Learning Goal (ELG) (children are awarded 1 if they are emerging towards the ELG, 2 if they are expected within the ELG or 3 if they have exceeded the ELG). The scores are sent to the local authority. Teachers use analysis of these scores to inform future planning. Each child's data is discussed with their Year 1 teacher so that a smooth transition occurs.

8 The role of parents/carers

The school believes that all parents/carers have an important role to play in their child's learning journey. This joint approach to learning is achieved through:

- talking to parents/carers about their child before their child starts in our school;
- teachers visits all children in their home setting prior to their starting school;
- the children have the opportunity to spend time with their teacher before starting school in their preschool/nursery setting;

- the children also spend time with their teachers in the school setting. This occurs when the children visit with pre-school/nursery staff and when parents come for informal stay and play sessions;
- inviting all parents/carers to a new parents meeting in the summer term;
- offering parents/carers regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress;
- keeping parents/carers informed about the curriculum through termly newsletters and asking for planning ideas from parents/carers and children.
- offering an 'open door' policy where parents/carers can discuss their views, problems or ideas with members of staff;
- hosting a parents consultation evening termly at which the teacher and the parent/carer discuss the child's progress.
- Parents/carers receive a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year;
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents/carers to become secure and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances;
- arranging a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents/carers;
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents/carers. There is regular communication with home through the child's home-school liaison book. Parents/Carers are invited to a Foundation Stage curriculum evening to explore the kind of activities and objectives that the children undertake in the reception classes.
- Encouraging parents/carers to support their child's home learning through directed/open ended activities.

9 Resources

A learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is planned for that encourages a positive attitude to learning. Materials and equipment are used that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. The children are encouraged to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as this encourages independent learning.

10 Admission into School

The children in start school in either a morning or an afternoon session for a week at the start of the academic year. This gives the school staff the opportunity to work on a one-to-one basis and in small groups. Children then attend all together for a whole morning and stay for their lunch before embarking on full time after two weeks.

11 Review Arrangements

Governors will monitor the implementation of this policy through sub-committee and full governing body meetings. This policy will be reviewed on the specified review date or earlier if necessary.

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Sub Committee Reviewed (date) September 2018	Signed (Headteacher) <i>Sarah Dugdale</i>
Full Governing Body Ratified (date) October 2018	Signed (Chair of Governors) <i>Cei Davies Linn</i>
Review Date: September 2019	