



# **New Brancepeth Primary School (Part of the Discovery Federation)**

## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

**Updated: March 2021**

## Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2021

### **INTENT**

This policy document reflects the aims and vision of our teaching and learning within the Early Years Foundation Stage. It provides a framework within which all staff work and gives guidance on planning, teaching and assessment. It is in line with current EYFS structure

The Early Years Education we provide is based on the following themes and the principles that inform them:

#### A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments

- it builds on prior learning, knowing our children and what they already know and can do
- it ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged
- it offers a structure for learning from a range of starting points
- content that matches the needs of young children attending our setting
- activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- it provides a rich and stimulating environment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is vital in ensuring children receive the best start in life, leaving as confident learners who are prepared for later schooling and adulthood. The Early Learning Goals outline developmental steps typically achieved within each age bracket for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from three years of age to the end of the Reception year. The Nursery children can start as soon as they have had their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. In our school, we have one intake in September for children joining the Reception year group. (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday.) Key Stage 1 starts for our children at the beginning of Year 1.

We also now accept 2-year-olds, whose parents are in receipt of a Golden Ticket. 2-year-olds may start the term after their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday i.e. if they are born in December, they are able to start with us in the Spring Term.

#### **1 Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

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

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding of the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

#### **2 Teaching and Learning Style**

**2.1** Our policy on Teaching and Learning defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school. These features apply to teaching and learning across all the Key Stages in our school.

**2.2** Important features of practice in our school that relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, to ensure that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement
- having a clear understanding of children and their development and how different styles of teaching support learning of individuals
- providing a range of first-hand experiences, offering clear explanations, making appropriate interventions, and extending and developing play and talk or other means of communication
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children progress throughout their time in the Early Years 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
- opportunities created for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management
- enabling 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
- regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Early Years Foundation Stage

### **3 Play in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

**3.1** Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them to make sense of the world and develop ideas for self-initiated activities. The environment and expectations within the setting encourage the children to learn how to control themselves and develop an understanding of the need for rules. They can 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.

### **4 The Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum**

**4.1** Four guiding principles that shape our early years practice are:

- 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 match their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers; and
- **children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates**. Our curriculum covers the education and care of all children in early years, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

These four principles underpin our effective practice in the care, development and learning of young children within our setting. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop several competencies, skills, and concepts across several areas of learning.

**4.2** Throughout the Reception year in our school, children have daily phonics, mathematics and story-mapping sessions with a short carpet session and a follow-up activity which the children complete in small groups. As children progress through the year, they will be encouraged to start working more independently. In Nursery, children have a daily Group Time session when they spend time with the other children who are in their group to complete a short activity. Nursery children also have a daily pre-phonics session where they focus on Letters and Sounds Phase 1 type activities to encourage them to tune into the sounds around them. This will support them for when they move into Reception and begin to learn Letters and Sounds Phase 2. Children in both Nursery and Reception also have daily Physical Development Sessions where they will be involved in activities which will develop their gross and fine motor skills. We have a dedicated programme which has been planned by Future Steps, the Occupational Therapy service which we buy into.

**4.3** The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Our Long-Term plan is a 2-year cycle, based around a book which we cover across two weeks. We also use a book half-termly to plan additional learning experiences. Our Medium-Term planning is completed half-termly and identifies the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and for those exceeding the Early Learning Goals. Our planning is also flexible to allow our practitioners to incorporate children's interests and needs. All long term plans for subjects within in our school incorporate the Early Years as we see this as a crucial stage in children's development. Subject leaders for all primary core subjects track back to Early years for monitoring purposes and to ensure clear progression and continuity in our curriculum whatever stage our children are at within school.

**4.4** Daily synthetic phonics lessons take place in Reception following the Letters and Sounds scheme of work to ensure progression in reading skills in line with the Year 1 phonics screening test.

**4.5** We follow the White Rose Maths Scheme which focuses on developing a deep understanding of number, moving from the concrete i.e. using practical resources to the abstract whereby children are challenged through problem solving tasks and are asked to justify the answers they provide. We keep things play-based whilst developing our understanding of numbers and the value behind them. We also use the Number Blocks alongside the White Rose Maths Scheme and a range of storybooks to consolidate understanding linking to the Big Ideas in maths.

**4.6** We want to develop children's Understanding of the World around them, so we introduced Wacky Wednesdays, where we complete a simple science experiment on Wednesdays and talk to the children about what they observed as the experiment was conducted.

**4.7** We are extremely fortunate this year to have all the children taking part in Forest Fridays! On Fridays, our Nursery and Reception children head off to the forest area at the back of the school playing field and take part in activities such as making natural collages, creating musical instruments out of natural materials. and doing scavenger hunts in the forest.

## IMPACT

Our EYFS Curriculum ensures that children begin to develop the crucial early literacy and mathematical skills which are built upon as they move through our school. We develop their communication skills so that they can communicate successfully with their peers and the staff in the setting. We instil in our children a love of books and stories through our story mapping. We provide children with a positive and secure start to their education at New Brancepeth Primary School. We encourage independence using continuous provision, and this helps to promote confident learners who can self-select their activities and resources.

### **5 Inclusion in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

**5.1** In our school we believe that every child matters. We give our children every opportunity to achieve to their full potential. We plan to ensure that everyone's needs, and requirements are met and take into consideration life experiences of all learners (see our policy on SEND).

**5.2** In the Early Years Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of our children and enable them to achieve to their full potential. Children who progress beyond the expectation of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum are extended and challenged according to the exceeding descriptors and then the criteria of the Key Stage 1 framework. We plan to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with Special Educational Needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

**5.3** 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 to motivate, scaffold and extend learning
- 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 children's progress and taking action to provide support, as necessary. This involves speech therapy, speaking and listening groups, and fine and gross motor development sessions for some of our children.

### **6 Assessment**

**6.1** We use on-going assessment of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of observation, and this involves the teacher and other adults, such as Teaching Assistants as appropriate. Where we have outside agencies working with children, such as Speech and Language Therapists or the Movement Service, they may also contribute to assessment.

**6.2** During the children's first 3 weeks in Reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline assessment. We use this information to modify the teaching

programme for individual children and groups of children. In Nursery, children will be observed as part of their baseline too.

**6.3** The teacher completes assessments every half term, before making a final judgement at the end of the child's Reception year. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information with parents at parents' evenings and in the report which parents receive in the Summer Term. In Nursery, the teacher will make assessments of children every half-term too. This is based on observations of the children in child-led play as well as in adult-led activities such as Group Times or activities which the children have been taking part in.

**6.4** We use an on-line system called itrack to upload our assessments of children and observations of the children. We also keep evidence in floor books for phonics, maths, story-mapping, wacky Wednesdays, 2-year-olds, and physical development. Within these books we use a simple traffic light system to quickly assess how children did activities. This then informs future planning.

**6.5** Reception children have targets in their Mathematics and Literacy books. The school, parents, and children all work in partnership to enable the children to reach their targets and identify next steps for progression and learning. Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs and gives details of the child's general progress.

**6.6** We are keen for parental voice within your child's on-line profile, so if you observe your child doing something new, please let us know and we can upload this.

## **7 The role of parents**

**7.1** We believe that all parents play a vital role in the education of their child. You are their first educators. We recognise the role that parents have, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- discussions with parents their child before they start in Nursery / Reception
- the teacher and Nursery staff visit all children in their home setting prior to them starting Nursery – this will re-start once COVID-19 restrictions are fully lifted
- the children can spend time with their teacher before starting school
- inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school
- offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our Reception class and Nursery
- We share a termly traffic light tracker with parents which is a general report in relation to attendance etc.
- We share resilience passports with parents at regular parents evenings which link to our Federation's core values.
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher about any concerns. There is a formal meeting for parents each term at which the teacher and the parents discuss the child's progress. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year
- having flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to feel confident in the provision we offer, and by allowing time to discuss each child's circumstances
- We understand that for most children, going to Nursery is the first time they have been separated from their parents / carers. For this reason, we encourage children to

visit the Nursery with their parents prior to them starting. Once the child starts Nursery, if they are unsettled, we can be flexible and arrange a staggered transition to enable your child to feel comfortable and settle

- arranging a variety of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school, and parents
- offering a range of activities that support the involvement of parents.

## **8 Home-School Learning**

In Reception, children will receive a reading book and a reading diary. Initially, these books may have no text and the purpose is simply to chat about the story with your child. As soon as children can segment and blend words, we will start sending home reading books which are closely matched to the child's phonic level. We encourage parents to read at least 3 times a week with your child to support the development of early reading. We also ask parents to complete the reading diary as this is a means of communication. For all children in Foundation Stage, we have invested in books for each age group – Page Turners. Your child will come home on a weekly basis with a story book, and we would encourage you to share this book with your child before returning it so that it can be changed.

## **9 Resources**

**9.1** We plan a learning environment:

- both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children live in and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own choices over the activities on offer to promote independent learning.
- our resources are labelled and have photographs which supports the children to be more independent in accessing resources, but also promotes independence when tidying resources away.

## **10 Early Intervention**

**10.1** Through our on-going assessment and observation of children in Early Years Foundation Stage, we can identify children who may need some additional support to fully access the Early Years Curriculum. We will discuss our concerns with you and with your consent, we may refer your child to external agencies such as Speech and Language for further assessment or we may provide your child with some additional support within school. If a parent has any concerns about their child's development, Early Years Foundation Staff are available daily to discuss these concerns with the parents. Parents can also speak with the SENCO if they have any concerns about their child's development.

## **11 Promoting Healthy Lifestyles**

**11.1** Whilst children are in Nursery or Reception, they have a snack mid-morning. To drink, children are offered milk or water and to eat, children have fruit or vegetables. Parents of Reception children are encouraged to sign up with Cool Milk so that your child can get milk in the mornings. We provide a water bottle for each child – these are named and the ones in Nursery have their photographs on them and the children have access to these water bottles throughout the day.

**11.2** We can provide a school lunch to Nursery children, at a small daily cost. Children eat their lunch within the main school dining hall and a member of staff supervises them whilst they have their lunch. The children go for lunch prior to the rest of the school, so it is a good opportunity to practise their social skills. All Reception aged children are provided with a free school lunch and are encouraged to be independent in collecting their knife, fork, spoon, and tray and then selecting the food they want for lunch. Children take their water bottles with them into the dining hall. Following their lunch, they are encouraged to take their tray away. Staff take children into the dining hall and there are always staff on duty in the dining hall.

## **12 Outreach Staff**

**12.1** Outreach Staff may be in Nursery and Reception to provide additional support for children in our Nursery and Reception. These staff also provide support to other children in other settings.

## **13 Key Workers**

**13.1** When your child is admitted into Nursery or Reception, they will be allocated a Key Worker. The role of the Key Worker is to ensure that children feel safe and cared for whilst in Nursery or Reception. The role of the Key Worker is particularly important in settling the child into the setting. The Key Worker is responsible for completing assessments for the child. The Key Worker is the first point of contact if you have any concerns whilst your child is in Nursery or Reception, however as the Early Years Foundation Stage Team work so closely, if the Key Worker were unavailable, parents can speak to any member of staff.

Signed: (Chair of Governors)

Date: March 2021

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy Review Date: March 2022