



BRIZE NORTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Early Years Foundation Stage Policy



Review Date Planned	Review Date	Date adopted by Governing Body
		4th July 2018

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. Our Early Years Foundation Stage accommodates children in the Reception year (aged 4 – 5) only.

Each year we have 17 places for children in the Foundation Stage, who join some Year 1 children in our FS/Y1 class.

Aims

At Brize Norton Primary School, we aim to give each child a positive and meaningful start to their school life, in which they can establish solid foundations on which to develop into independent and fearless lifelong learners.

We will encourage children to develop independence within a secure and friendly atmosphere; to support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing; to help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and by developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

Our high expectations will enable each child to develop socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally and to achieve their full potential. We will offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited availability for development through a wide range of new and exciting first-hand experiences that will give children the opportunity to consolidate, explore and test their skills, knowledge and understanding alongside existing experiences. We will ensure that children are kept healthy and safe and that they achieve the knowledge and skills they need to start the National Curriculum in Year 1.

The Curriculum

Our Foundation Stage follows the curriculum as outlined in the 2014 Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>. This clearly defines what we teach. The following policy details the specifics of our setting.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

A Unique Child

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/ sharing assemblies, house points and rewards, to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

Positive relationships

We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Enabling environments

We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Our learning environment is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active, be quiet and rest. The seven areas of learning are defined so that children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Learning and development

Through observations we assess the children's interests and stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

Areas of Learning

The EYFS is made up of **three prime** areas of learning:

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

There are **four specific areas** of learning:

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

At Brize Norton Primary School all areas are delivered through a well-planned play based approach, with a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. Throughout the foundation stage our long, medium and short-term plans ensure that each child has the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in every area at the appropriate developmental level. Our long term planning ensures coverage so that all children have opportunities to work towards and achieve the Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. We follow a half termly topic based approach which allows flexibility to ensure that both children's needs and interests are taken into account.

Play

Learning through play underpins our approach to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. We embrace the fact that young children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them to learn. In doing so we can provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning and to help them make sense of the world. Children have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experiences at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests, inspire those around them and consolidate their understanding and skills. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. Our adults take an active role in child initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating, teaching and extending play, skills and language.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and the Foundation Stage teacher plans activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics are:

Playing and Exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'

Active Learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements

Creating and Thinking Critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Inclusion

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the Foundation Stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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.

We will provide:

- a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively;
- a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced.

We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service and the educational psychologist amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Assessment

Throughout the Foundation Stage children's knowledge, understanding, skills and achievements are assessed and tracked using the developmental stages set out in the document 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)'.

Our assessment depends on us getting to know our children very well and to this end we gather information from a range of sources: observations of the children in play, in adult led activities, through discussions with parents and carers and through talking to the children. We keep written and photographic evidence to help us build up a picture of children's strengths and achievements and to help us to plan for children's next steps in learning.

After they have had the chance to settle in at the start of joining our school, children are assessed to determine a baseline, or starting point, for their future learning. Judgements will be based on the adults' observations of children during activities and play. Parents' / carers' views on their child as a learner will be taken into account.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, the end of year assessment of children's achievements in all areas of learning, is a statutory report. Observational evidence and samples of children's work throughout the school year will be used to assess children as 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding' based on their understanding and achievement of the Early Learning Goals set out in the EYFS curriculum. Parents/carers will be given information of their child's achievements in a written report at the end of the Summer term. This will be used by the Year 1 teacher to help plan their learning as they make the transition into Key Stage 1.

Transitions

At Brize Norton Primary School we recognise that starting school and moving up classes has the potential to be a stressful time for both children and parents. To this end we have established a strong procedure for transitions to ensure that our children and parents are as confident and secure as they can be when facing the challenges of each year group.

Before children start school, the Foundation Stage teacher visits children wherever possible in their nursery or preschool, to meet the staff who work with them and to see them in an environment in which they are comfortable. Parents and children have several opportunities to visit the school together through two drop-in sessions and a lunch time where they have a school dinner with other new families. We also hold a meeting for parents during which we explain how the Foundation Stage works in our school.

Towards the end of the summer term prior to their entry to school, children are invited in for a half-day visit without their parents, in which they will meet their teacher (and where possible, teaching assistant) and the other children who will be in their class. This enables children to go into the summer holiday without anxiety and with an understanding of what awaits them.

The start of the school year is gradual: the children come for the morning only for a few days and then spend a few days going home after lunch, before staying for the whole day.

At first they do not attend assembly with the older children and play in their own area away from the other children. The transition to playing with older children and attending assembly is made when the children are ready, usually about October half term.

At the end of the EYFS, children are divided into two groups: those who will join our Y1/2 class as Year 1s and those who will become the Year 1s in our FS/Y1 class. The groups are divided principally by age but with flexibility: we will advise the parents of those children who have not achieved a good level of development and met their early learning goals to allow them to continue to benefit from access to learning within the FS/Y1 classroom. If both the parents and the school staff agree that the class they would be in by age would not be the best for them, a child will be moved to the other class. If there is no agreement between parents and school staff, the child will be placed in the appropriate class by age alone.

Whichever Year 1 class a child will be in, they have the opportunity to spend our annual “shuffle up day” with their new teacher and new classmates before the summer break.

Partnership with Parents

We believe that parents and carers are a child’s first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what their child does at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child and to feel comfortable in our setting. We encourage parents to come into class with their children at the start of the day to help them settle, and to speak informally to the teacher at this time and at the end of the day. We also offer parents a variety of learning workshops to provide advice and information on how they can support their child’s learning. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to share information about their child, to ask questions and to discuss their child’s learning with the teachers. We have formal parents’ evenings twice a year, in the Autumn and Spring terms, and a formal written report and Open Evening for parents in the summer term.

Parents are encouraged to join in with their child’s education from the very start of their school journey. Parents are encouraged to support children’s learning through completing reading records, simple homework activities and by sharing assemblies and whole class activities.

Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. We follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014) and we adhere to the school’s safeguarding policy.

We are a healthy school. Children under 5 have the opportunity to receive free milk and all children have access to fresh water and free fruit. Foundation Stage children are eligible for free school meals or can choose to bring in a healthy packed lunch.

The Foundation Stage classroom has access to its own toileting facilities and we teach the children the importance of hygiene and hand washing techniques. Throughout the year we plan cooking activities to give children experiences of a range of healthy food.