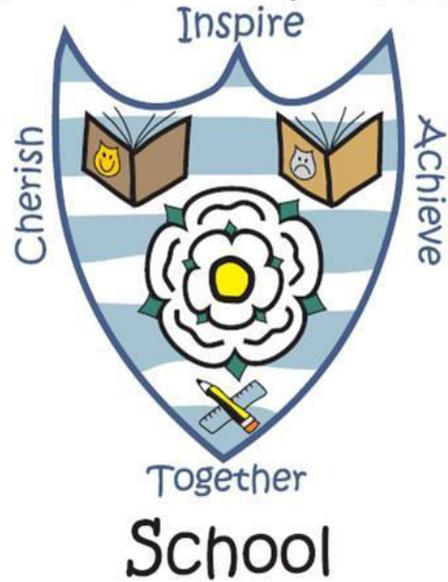


Birkwood Primary



FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2021

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

“The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
Department for Education, 2017

At Birkwood Primary School, we are committed to providing a high quality early years education, which gives children a secure and confident start to their school life and nurtures a lifelong love of learning. We are fully committed to the purpose and aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

Staffing and Organisation

The Foundation stage focuses on the needs of children from 3 to the end of Foundation Stage. Although there is a two-term entry into the FS1, if places do become available at other times of the year then children will join us shortly after their third birthday. At over subscribed times some children will not start until they are four. There is a one term intake of 40 FS2 children in September comprising of two classes of 20; Pupil Premium Funding has enabled class sizes to remain small.

The unit is divided into two areas; a nursery setting and a foundation stage two setting. Therefore, the learning environment can be tailored to meet the needs of the children. Both settings have free flow access to the outdoor area.

Staff are organised to support the children in a balance of adult led and child initiated experiences throughout the day in both settings. All children in Nursery access phonics and numeracy through a balance of adult led sessions, delivered in small groups, and through play. All children in Foundation Stage 2 access a daily phonics and numeracy session where groups are tailored to meet children’s individual needs. This is embedded and developed through continuous provision.

Planning

The Early Learning Goals are the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the time they reach the age of five. There are three prime areas of learning:

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

Within the Foundation Stage we also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

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

We adopt an ‘in the moment’ approach to teaching and learning where children’s interests are at the centre; thereby promoting children’s agency. We believe in providing rich, engaging and purposeful learning opportunities both within the unit and through the wider environment. We recognise that the seven areas of learning cannot be delivered in isolation and seek opportunities to make links between them. We aim to deliver the curriculum through planned, purposeful play and present new concepts in meaningful contexts that enable the children to build on what they already know. Planning has a sharp focus on the children’s needs, their interests and their stages of development.

Long Term Planning

“Ongoing formative assessment is at the heart of Early Years Practice” – Development Matters 2012

Long term planning is based on the individual needs of each cohort and is created in response to initial baselines.

Medium Term Planning

Medium term planning is shaped through a flexible overview of topics focused on seasons, the natural world and celebrations.

Short Term Planning

Practitioners are highly skilled in delivering the curriculum through an ‘in the moment’ approach. Planning is edited and developed throughout the week in response to children’s interest and next steps. Short term planning is based on a continuous cycle of observing, assessing and planning.

Effective Teaching and Learning

Children are encouraged to play an active role in shaping their learning experiences. Each week, two children from each class are a key focus ~ we call this ‘Believe in your selfie’ week. Each child knows that this is their special week and all staff spend time engaging in discussion with the children about what they are interested in, which skills they would like to develop further and which resources they need to support their learning. This helps to shape the learning environment and the context for the short term planning. Staff still work with all other children and continue to work on their next steps and develop their interests.

We aim to provide an attractive, challenging and supportive learning environment that offers high quality opportunities for the children to learn through play, both indoors and outdoors. There is a range of continuous provision available in the unit, that is designed to offer open-ended, practical learning opportunities. Children are supported to think creatively and imaginatively and explore how resources can be adapted. The provision is enhanced with additional resources regularly and in response to children’s interests, needs and next steps.

All children are involved in creating a floor book of their learning experiences and can access this at any time. They develop their language skills when discussing and reviewing their previous learning. Children look at and discuss their learning and electronic journal with their key person and with their parents/carers at parents’ evenings throughout the year.

Observation and Assessment

Internal assessment systems are robust, accurate and inform provision. Staff undertake intensive assessments relating to each individual child, collating as much information as possible, this may include pre-school visits, observations, Open Days, transition visits including visits from other settings. At Birkwood, the robust process includes:

Pre-school

- Visits from other settings are organised as part of the transition process;
- Where necessary, Birkwood staff visit other settings;
- Observations and home visits are undertaken with parents and carers for children new to the setting in both Nursery and Foundation Stage 2
- An Open Day is held for all new children and their families in Nursey
- A transition morning and lunch is held for all children starting in Foundation Stage 2
- A phased entry takes place in both Nursery and Foundation Stage 2 to ensure all children settle well and baselines can be completed
- Information and documentation collected from other settings which informs initial judgements;
- Informal conversations with parents, including an ‘All about me’ booklet that parents can complete with their child;
- School documents shared with parents, e.g. School Prospectus and school information provided on a memory stick.

Within the first 15 days (or longer if a child requires more time to settle)

- Collect evidence from other settings, for example individual Learning Journeys that inform similar documentation within our setting;
- Where available and appropriate, information is collected from other agencies, e.g. Health Visitor, Parent Support Advisor, this informs the required provision and support;
- Formal and informal baseline observations commence immediately and take place from the 1st to the 15th day of starting at Nursery and Foundation Stage 2 (or longer if a child requires more time to settle);
- A key person is assigned to each child and is responsible for the above assessments, overseen by the class teacher.
- Records of observations, conversations with other children and adults, photographs, pieces of learning are utilised to assess each child against the criteria from the New EYFS Framework;
- This evidence is collated into an individual Learning log on Eazmag.

During child initiated learning, practitioners record 'snapshot' observations on iPads. Notes about guided activities are recorded also on iPads or planning sheets. In Foundation Stage 2 children have a literacy folder, a mathematics folder and a topic folder. In Nursery children have a learning folder. Each child has a 'Learning Journey' on the EAZMag system and all observations are gathered along with photographs and recordings which inform tracking and assessments.

In the Summer Term, FS2 staff consider the 17 ELGS in the EYFS Profile to decide whether a child is working at the **expected** levels, **exceeding** the levels or have not yet met the levels (**emerging**). Judgements against the ELGs are based on ongoing observations; all relevant records; discussions with parents and carers, and any other adults whom the teacher, parent or carer judges can offer a useful contribution.

At the end of the year, Year 1 teachers are given a copy of the Profile report and the information is transferred onto Educator. This helps to create a smooth transition and assists with the planning of activities in Year 1.

Working in Partnership

We recognise that children may access EYFS provision through other providers throughout the week and that all providers have an equally important role to play in their early years experiences. We seek information about the other settings that our children attend so that we can establish communication about their learning and development.

Parent Partnerships

We value the contribution that our parents/carers make to their child's learning and take every opportunity to work in collaboration with them. We offer workshops and 'Stay and Play' sessions for them to attend throughout the year. Each half term, we publish a newsletter to inform parents/carers what their child will be learning and how they can support them at home. Parent/carer consultations are held termly.

We welcome contributions from home and encourage parents/carers to post on our parent platform 'Class Dojo'. They also have access to their child's electronic learning journal on EazMag.

We provide interest sheets for parents/carers to complete during their child's 'Believe in your selfie' week.

One child from each class is chosen to take home a special reading bag each week which helps to develop a love of reading. FS2 children take reading books and a phonics pack home to share when they are ready.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

We recognise that every child is unique and we nurture every child's individual needs. This in turn ensures that our children are happy, confident and independent individuals who strive to achieve their very best.

Thereby the solid foundations are laid for learning and their happiness in school. In addition, we take into account children's life experiences when planning for their learning.

We meet the needs of the 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 safe and supportive learning environment in which the contributions of all children are valued;
- Using resources that reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;
- Planning challenging activities for children whose ability and understanding requires extension activities.
- Small intervention groups for children who need extra support.

Visits

Written parental permission to take the children into the local environment is sought upon admission to the school. Further permission is obtained for any other visits linked to topics and themes. Risk assessments are completed accordingly.

Key Person Approach

In Nursery each child is assigned a 'key person' who may be the teacher, nursery nurse or a teaching assistant. Parents are informed of who their child's key person is and receive information about their role.

The key person's responsibilities include:

- Helping the child to become familiar with the setting.
- Building a relationship with each child's parents, working in partnership with them to ensure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.
- Responding sensitively to the child's needs, feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- Ensuring that the learning opportunities on offer meet the needs of each child.

In Foundation Stage 2 the children are organised into two classes and have a 'key person' who may be the teacher or teaching assistant. They are split into ability groups for phonics, mathematics, squiggle while you wiggle and dough disco and work with all adults across the setting in further guided groups.

Risk Assessments

In addition to the school's risk assessment, there is a foundation stage risk assessment document to address hazards in the provisional areas indoors and outdoors. The hazards are identified and managed.

Information for Parents and Carers

A School Prospectus is provided for new parents and carers that includes information about Birkwood Primary School and an EYFS pack which details the types of activities provided, staffing and food and drink. There is a weekly newsletter that is sent home with the children every Friday to inform parents/carers about upcoming events or important dates.

Transition from Nursery to the Foundation Stage

We work closely with our feeder settings to ensure that children make a smooth transition to school. In the summer term, we organise opportunities for children to visit and for staff to visit them in their setting and at home. School staff make additional visits to talk to pre-school staff.

In Foundation Stage 2, we hold a transition meeting for new parents/carers in the summer term, where we outline daily routines and expectations. In Nursery we hold meetings for new starters at each entry point.

A phased entry takes place in both Nursery and Foundation Stage 2 to ensure all children settle well and baselines can be completed.

Being Active

Children have access to an outdoor area, which provides a wide range of physical activities to develop their gross motor skills, including a large sandpit, mud kitchen, sports area and climbing apparatus. FS2 children also take part in one PE session each week.

Food and Drink

We provide a 'free flow' snack area where children can develop their independence. A range of healthy snacks are available, supplied by "The School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme". In Foundation Stage 2 the children have fruit and milk when they arrive at school each morning. Milk is free for children up until the term that they turn five.

Information about the children's dietary needs is sought when they enter the setting. A list of the children's dietary needs is available in the unit and all practitioners have regard to this when putting out food and drink in the snack area or when leading a cooking or food tasting activity.

Illnesses and Injuries

If a child becomes unwell whilst at school, a member of staff will:

- Phone the parents/carers, explain that their child is unwell, explain the symptoms noted and ask them to collect their child.
- Sit with the child in a quiet place away from other children, if possible, until the parents arrive.
- If the child has had sickness or diarrhoea, explain the policy of at least a 48 hour clearance of either symptom before the child may return.

In the case of an injury, appropriate first aid will be administered by a qualified first aider. Each setting has a paediatric trained member of staff available. A first aid kit is kept in each setting and its contents are in accordance with advice from the Health and Safety Executive and the Community Health Physician. All accidents are recorded in one of the school's accident books and signed by the member of staff who dealt with the incident. The staff member dealing with the incident is responsible for completing an accident slip and this is sent home with the child at the end of the day. Parents/carers may be contacted by telephone to inform them of an injury if deemed necessary.

Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body reviews this policy every 2 years. The Governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the Governing Body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

This policy will be reviewed in February 2023.

Signed _____ Headteacher Date _____

Signed _____ Chair of Governors Date _____