Early Years Policy

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), we believe that all children are entitled to the best possible start in their school life, both intellectually emotionally, in order to enable them to develop their full potential.

Aims

- promote achievement for all.
- provide the highest quality care and education for all our pupils, giving them a strong foundation for their future learning.
- create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable pupils to become confident and independent learners.
- value each individual pupil.
- work alongside parents to meet their child’s needs and help him/her to reach their full potential.

Early Years Framework

We adhere to the Statutory Framework of the EYFS and the four guiding principles that shape practice within Early Years’ settings.

- Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can develop into a resilient, capable, confident and self-assured learner.
- Children learn to be strong and independent through building positive relationships.
- Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and where there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.

We plan an exciting and challenging curriculum which is based on our observations of children’s needs, interests and stages of development across the seven areas of learning. This curriculum enables the children to achieve to their best and often exceed the early learning goals. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children’s curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

These three areas are the prime areas:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
Children are also supported through the 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

Principles into Practice

As part of our practice we:

- underpin the ethos of Bold Beginnings by incorporating the findings of the report within our curriculum
- provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as an integral part of learning.
- promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support.
- work in partnership with parents and within the wider context.
- plan challenging learning experiences based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment.
- provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

The main method of assessment in the EYFS is through practitioners’ observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis. Significant observations of children’s achievements are collated in their own personal learning journey and are shared with parents regularly. Parents are encouraged to comment on their child’s progress and next steps. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. Observations are evaluated, learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support next steps and progress.

Assessments are carried out regularly throughout the year. Assessments are made against the Early Years Outcomes. In the final term of the EYFS we report on each child’s attainment, using the EYFSP and judgements are made showing whether a child is emerging, achieving or exceeding the Early Learning Goals (ELG). After each assessment period, standards and progress are reported and discussed with leaders, parents and governors. This is then used to support year group actions and curriculum planning.

The EYFS framework provides a long term plan to follow by ensuring that all ELGs are covered throughout the academic year. Using the Cornerstones creative curriculum, medium term planning is created and takes into account the individual child’s learning and developmental needs. All areas of learning are planned for and assessments are used to ensure that future planning reflects the
identified needs of the child. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child initiated activities, both indoors and in the outdoor environment.

**Active Learning through Play**

We recognise that young children learn best when they are active. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop in confidence, they learn to make decisions, which provide them with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their own learning. We understand that active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods. We believe that Early Years’ Education should be as practical as possible and our settings have an ethos of learning through play. Play is an essential and rich part of the learning process and supports the child in all areas of development. Play is a powerful motivator encouraging children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Across the Early Years, the curriculum and pedagogy is based on play which underpins the teaching and learning.

**Parents as Partners**

We strive to create and maintain strong partnerships with parents and carers, as we recognise that together we can have a significant impact on a child’s learning. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child’s education and care.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child’s education as follows:

- All parents are invited to an induction meeting in the Summer term before their child starts school. (Nursery Inductions are held termly before each intake of children)
- Home visits/interviews are arranged before the children start at Birches Green Nursery to meet where possible with the parent and child on a 1-1 basis. Information is gathered to help the school plan for the child’s needs.
- Reception staff visit children in other nursery settings to gain information and plan for the needs of all children.
- Celebrations Assembly provides an enjoyable way for parents to share their children’s work.
- Parents are free to come and discuss concerns informally.
- There is a formal meeting for parents in the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms at which the teacher and the parent discuss the child’s progress. Informal Parent ‘drop-in’ sessions are also planned on alternate half terms.
- ‘WOW’ vouchers are used for parents to fill in and share their children achievements at home
- Parents receive a report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of each academic year.
- We have an expectation that parents support learning at home by sharing books, helping their child sight read the First 100 common words (Reception) and encouraging them to complete their weekly homework challenge.
- We hold parent workshops the throughout the year that will advise parents on how to support their children at home in a range of curriculum areas.
Transition

Transition is carefully planned and time is given to ensure continuity of learning. At any transition, we acknowledge the needs of the child and establish effective partnerships with the other adults involved with the child, including those at other settings. Children attend introductory sessions to Nursery and Reception to develop a familiarity with the setting and the practitioners.

In the final term, the Year 1 teachers moderate assessments with the Early Years’ staff to discuss each child’s development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teachers to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that meets the needs of all children.

There is always a member of staff in both Nursery and Reception that are trained as qualified paediatric first aiders to support the needs of all pupils.

This policy will be reviewed on a bi-annual basis.

Policy reviewed by Governors       June 2018
Next review due                   June 2020

Signed __________________________ Chair of Governors       Dated ___________
Signed __________________________ Head Teacher              Dated ___________