

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Vision Statement

At Purley Oaks Early Years Foundation Stage we strive for excellence. We are ambitious in our approach and believe that learning is unlimited. We continue to challenge the children to better themselves and expect above average progress.

We are committed to making the child the centre of our work. In order to make this effective, we aim to foster good relationships with parent and carers, recognising them as the children's first and most important educators. We believe that a partnership between home and the school will help the children have the best possible experiences in their formative early years.

'Early childhood is a crucial stage of life in terms of children's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development and of their well-being. It is a time when children particularly need high quality care and learning experiences. The Foundation Stage, which lasts from age 3 until the end of Reception year is a distinct stage and is important both in its own right and in preparing children for later schooling.'

(Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage)

All children deserve the best possible start to their education and need secure foundations upon which future learning can build throughout their school years and beyond.

Principles

At Purley Oaks we believe that:

- Learning for all children should be enjoyable and challenging.
- How children are encouraged to learn is as important as what they learn.
- Effective education requires practitioners who have a secure understanding of child development and the ability to plan, teach and evaluate a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- Planned and purposeful opportunities for teaching and learning should be provided both indoors and outdoors.
- Practitioners need to work in partnership with parents/carers who are their child's first educators.
- Children need opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning by making choices, enjoying success and feeling safe to make and learn from mistakes.
- Practitioners should support and extend children's learning through purposeful observation and assessment, by evaluating activities and by appropriate intervention and interaction.

Aims

- To provide a well-planned and resourced curriculum with provision for the different starting points from which children develop their learning, building on what they can already do know.
- To provide opportunities for all children to succeed in an atmosphere of care and of feeling valued.
- To enable all children to become confident and independent learners.
- To develop children's ability to talk, discuss and reason.
- To develop children's self-esteem, respect for others and sense of achievement.

The curriculum for 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 (these support our school ethos and ARACE words).
- Social skills.
- Listening, Attention skills and persistence.
- Language and communication, with an emphasis on talking.
- Reading and writing.
- Mathematics.
- Knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Physical development.
- Creative development.

Procedures for Admission and Induction

We aim to ensure a positive transition from home/pre-school to full time education for each child.

Foundation Stage 1

In the summer before they are due to start children are invited to attend an 'open day' at the nursery with their parents. On this occasion they are able to meet staff and look around their new setting. They will also receive a foundation stage booklet as well as all relevant administrative information.

Appointments will be made for home visits by the F.S.1 staff for early in September. On this visit all necessary paperwork is completed, information given and the child may do a drawing or have a photograph taken to be displayed in the nursery ready for his/her first day. The 'settling-in' procedure is discussed and a leaflet outlining this is given to parents/carers. (It is stressed that this procedure is flexible and is very much according to the child's needs.) It is an important opportunity for parents, teachers and children to begin their relationship, and this partnership is fostered throughout the year.

Foundation Stage 2

Children from Foundation Stage 1 are given opportunities to encounter Foundation Stage 2 with a member of staff throughout the year. These visits increase in frequency during the summer term, allowing children to become familiar with their new setting and, therefore, minimizing anxieties about this transition.

Staff will arrange transition meetings with local nurseries to gain information on children and will sometimes go to the nurseries to meet with the children. At these meetings, journals and transition sheets are often provided so that the class teacher can find out information on the child.

F.S.2 staff visit our nursery to meet children in their own setting and spend time observing them.

There is an information meeting for parents/carers to meet the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and all F.S.2 staff. They will receive general information and see their child's new classroom as well as to ask any specific questions or discuss any concerns they may have.

The EYFS lead will visit nurseries with our school expectations to explain to nurseries how to make their children 'school ready'.

When children begin school, parents/carers are encouraged to stay with their children to settle them for as long as is needed.

All children start on a part-time basis to enable them to settle well into school. This is extremely important as it allows staff the time to make the very detailed observations and assessments needed in order to be able to plan appropriately for each child's needs. From these assessments, the staff will moderate together to form a baseline. It also enables staff to build positive relationships with parents which is essential if there is to be an effective partnership within which children feel secure and confident.

If parents and staff feel that a child is not yet ready to stay at school for a whole day then arrangements are made to continue part-time for a while longer according to the child's needs.

The Curriculum

The Foundation Stage Curriculum is from the DfE Guidance. It is organised into 17 aspects of learning. Each of these areas is made up of age month bands, finishing with the Early Learning Goal. Within this there are the prime and specific areas:

Prime:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language development
- Physical Development

Specific:

- Literacy
- Maths
- Understanding the World
- Expressive arts and design

Planning for Teaching and Learning

Learning for young children is rewarding and enjoyable. They naturally want to explore, investigate, discover, create, practice and consolidate their developing skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes.

Early Years Practitioners systematically help children to make connections in their learning and move them forward. The strategies used in learning and teaching vary and are adapted to suit the needs of the child.

Our Planning enables children to access learning at a level that is appropriately challenging and which enables each child to achieve high standards of attainment, in line with their own level of development.

The 17 aspects of learning are broken down into 'Early Learning Goals' which we expect all children to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage. These goals provide the basis for our yearly **Long Term Plan**. Our **Medium Term Plan** is completed half-termly identifying the goals, the intended learning as well as the possible activities and learning experiences which will be provided such as trips and visitors.

Short Term plans include a weekly indoor plan, a weekly phonics plan, a weekly carpet plan and one focus group activity plans. What has been achieved the previous day is evaluated and used to plan for the next day. In phonics, children are grouped according to ability and interest. These groupings are fluid and change regularly according to ongoing assessment. Children are encouraged to select resources and prepare them for the next day so that their interests are followed.

Within the learning experiences planned for the children there will be a balance of adult supported, adult directed and child initiated activities. Much of our work is done on a 1:1 basis so that the child can be conferenced through their work.

We know that children of this age learn best through play. They do not make a distinction between 'play' and 'work' and nor do we as practitioners.

'Play is essential for physical, emotional and spiritual growth, for intellectual and educational development and for acquiring social and behavioral skills' (Play Charter)

Through their play our children explore experiences which help them to make sense of the world in which they live. They experiment, build up ideas and knowledge and acquire social skills. They learn self-control and understand the need for rules. They learn how to think creatively and how to co-operate with others. They develop communication skills, they investigate and solve problems and they learn to express their needs and feelings in safe, controlled situations.

Assessment and Reporting of progress

We make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to ensure that our planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment takes the form of observations carried out by the Class Teachers, Early Years Practitioners and other members of the team as appropriate and at least once a half term, a long observation is completed for each child. At times this may also include specialist support agencies.

Observations made in the Foundation Stage are collected into an individual record called a Learning Journal. A tally chart is used at the front to collate the children's levels and from this practitioners can see at which age band a child is working at for the 17 aspects. This also informs the future planning. The weekly moderating of these journals ensures that all practitioners are levelling children in a fair way. All observations lead up to the child achieving the Early Learning Goal. Next steps are planned for the child's learning to ensure they are individually moved on towards the Early Learning Goal.

Formal Parent consultation meetings are held each term and an end of term report is written at Christmas and Easter. Parents may request a meeting to discuss their child's end of year report. We also actively encourage parents to talk to staff regularly about their child's progress in a more informal manner. The end of year report will explain which of the Early Learning Goals have been achieved and also report on the Characteristics of Learning. This end of year report will be shared with the year 1 teachers in a transition meeting. The teachers will talk through the Characteristics of Learning and how the child learns (playing and exploring, active learning – motivation, creating and thinking critically).

Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

Every child is an individual with a unique set of needs. Each is entitled to have the opportunity to learn in a variety of different ways. All children have the right to equality of opportunity and all should be positively acknowledged and valued.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of all our children; children with Special Educational needs, who are more able, with disabilities, from all social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of our children by:

- 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 styles and strategies based on individual children's needs.
- Providing a safe, secure learning environment where all children are valued.
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping.
- Monitoring progress and taking appropriate action to provide support when necessary. This support may be from our school S.E.N.C.O. or from outside agencies such as Speech and Language Therapists, Educational Psychologists, Health Visitors, Social Workers or various other specialists.

The Learning Environment

Children need to feel safe and secure and to have access to a rich and stimulating learning environment, which will encourage them to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience.

The indoor and outdoor areas are seen as one learning environment. All areas of provision are inviting and stimulating, clearly defined and carefully resourced every day.

Resources are well-maintained and clearly labeled with easy accessibility for the children in order to promote their independence and autonomy.

Staffing

The Early Years Department is staffed by 3 full-time qualified teachers, 2 part time teachers and 5 full-time Early Years teaching assistants. We also have support from members of the Inclusion team. Students, voluntary helpers and parents/carers are welcomed. Statutory requirements for adult to child ratios are 1:13 in the Nursery and 1:30 in Reception (and KS1) classes. At Purley Oaks, we maintain ratios of 1:10 in the Nursery and 1:15 in all infant classes.

All staff undertake continuous professional development, reflecting their own needs as well as those of the school and the children.

Partnership with Parents

When parents and practitioners work together in Early Years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning. We have seen this reflected in our data for the last 3 years.

We are committed to developing an effective partnership with parents/carers:

- We believe a successful partnership needs a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise. Workshops are held all year but especially in September to build partnerships and engage parents in our expectations.
- We value parents/carers as children's first and most enduring educators.
- We encourage parents to discuss any concerns as and when they arise. We open our doors at 8:40 am and always have 1 member of staff available to answer questions.
- We send information home each half term on what the children will be learning in each of the curriculum areas. Homework is sent home on a weekly basis and is explained at workshops.
- We organise regular opportunities for parents to visit our setting to share information on their child's progress, to share targets and to encourage active involvement in their child's development. The parents are welcomed to watch us teach one morning a week to see how we teach and what techniques we use in maths, reading and writing.
- We send out regular newsletters giving details of what is happening in the Foundation Stage.

- We have regular communication through the child's home/school planner.
- We invite parents to share any special skills/hobbies or interests in class and encourage them to accompany their children on school trips. We hold an open afternoon once a term where parents are invited to share in crafts and see activities we do at school.
- Parents are **always** welcomed into our classrooms to help children learn. Once a week, parents are encouraged to come in to view their child's work and to see how to best help them at home.
- Regular updates are added to the school website.

Behaviour

Our policy is based upon the principle of respect for oneself and for others.

The Early Years curriculum has a strong focus on teaching children appropriate behaviours.

We ensure that what we expect of our Foundation Stage children is realistic and based on their level of maturity and understanding. The self-discipline, which we foster, is based on an awareness of right and wrong and an appreciation of the needs of others. Any behaviour which hurts or disrupts others or inflicts damage is unacceptable and is never ignored.

If a child is showing unacceptable behaviour we take immediate action to protect others and to address the child's own difficulties.

Relevant School Policies

Other whole-school policies contain information relevant to Early Years (please refer to):

- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

Policy review date: March 2017