

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy 2018

Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its’ own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

- “Early Years Foundation Stage Profile” Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012

Principles

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

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

Learning and development. The Foundation Unit 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 unit is set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Putnoe Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development and the promotion of positive health and wellbeing. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. It is the Early Learning Goals that set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

The Early Years Foundation Stage extends from 0-5 years. Entry into our Foundation Stage (Nursery) is in the term after the child turns 4 and ends at the end of the Reception year. Entry into our primary school is at the beginning of the school year in which the children are 5 (although compulsory schooling does not begin until the start of the term after a child’s fifth birthday).

Aims

It is every child's right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. The overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes.

We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and teaching and learning is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Putnoe Primary School, we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment which is sensitive to the needs of the child including children with additional needs.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and ensure children are KS1 ready with a transitional programme to support them in the next stage of their learning.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Work in partnership with parents and guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability. We provide a designated member of staff responsible for 'parent partnerships' and a family worker who will provide support and opportunities to parents in supporting their child in their learning.
- Provide opportunities whereby children experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.
- Ensure children have a sense of belonging and feeling safe.
- Encourage children to be able to talk openly with trusted adults about their problems without feeling any stigma.

Teaching and Learning

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning by promoting and developing the prime areas of:

- personal, social and emotional development;
- physical development;
- language and communication;

and the specific areas of:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world;
- expressive arts and design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas are underpinned by the characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy on teaching and learning. They apply to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage just as much as they do to the teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 or 2.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation Stage are:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the 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;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;

- the identification, through observations and summative assessment, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;
- the clear aims of our work, and the regular monitoring of our work to evaluate and improve it;
- the regular identification of training needs for all adults working at the Foundation Stage.

Values Education

Our curriculum provision has values at its heart because we believe that Values aren't just important because they help to improve learning experiences for our children, they are important because they provide opportunities for our children to reflect and make choices – ones that will support them through life. We believe our children prosper and are more likely to know what they want to learn and how to learn it, if they experience a curriculum that is supported by an ethos that is steeped in core values.

Independent Learning

Through independent learning, our children explore and develop the learning experiences that help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up their ideas, learn how to control themselves, and begin to understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively both alongside other children and 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.

Inclusion in EYFS

We believe that all our children matter. 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 we are planning for their learning.

At the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. Some children progress beyond this point. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- planning opportunities that build on and extend the children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- using a variety of teaching strategies that are based on children's learning needs;
- providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children, and to help them to learn effectively;

- offering a safe and supportive learning environment, in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- employing resources that reflect diversity, and that avoid 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 providing support (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.

More Able Pupils

The more able children are identified on entry to Foundation Stage and work in a focused learning group to enhance their opportunities to progress. We plan differentiated and extension tasks, encouraging pupils to 'find their 'own level of challenge'. Through the use of 'Bloom's Taxonomy', we are able to implement effective questioning techniques to support higher order thinking and encourage a deeper understanding.

The EYFS curriculum

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas.

Both Nursery and Reception classes have daily phonics sessions, following the guidance in the "Letters & Sounds" document and in line with school policy. The Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Teachers use the national schemes of work, where appropriate, to support their planning for groups of children. Our half termly topic and curriculum overviews outline the intended learning, with outcomes, for children working towards the Early Learning Goals, and also for those working towards National Curriculum levels. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most children will have completed phase 4 of the "Letters & Sounds" document with more able children working within phase 5.

Assessment

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals. It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage.

We record each child's level of development against the 17 early Learning goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments 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, formative and summative assessment, and this involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

During the first term in the Nursery class (or Reception if the child has not attended our Nursery) the teacher completes baseline assessments on each child. These assessments in conjunction with the transitional notes from pre-schools, allow us to observe patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to identify ability teaching groups and adjust the teaching programme for groups of children.

Tracking sheets are kept by teachers to show progress against these baseline assessments and other key skills across maths and literacy. These are reviewed half termly, supported by pupil progress meetings with the Head teacher. Observations of children are recorded primarily, using electronic devices and feed directly into an electronic assessment tool. This allows practitioners to record each child's level of development to be beginning, working within or working securely within the Development Matters age-bands. Our whole school approach to using the assessment tool 'Target Tracker' allows for seamless tracking of progress of pupils throughout the school. Half term analysis reports are completed to track the progress of each class and cohort through 'Development Matters'.

At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the LA for analysis. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead, alongside joint moderation of work with the Foundation Stage teachers. We share this information too at parental consultation meetings and in the end-of-year report. Moderation of work takes place periodically throughout the year between Foundation Stage teachers and between Foundation Stage teachers and year one colleagues.

Each teacher keeps an assessment file to evidence summative assessments at the end of each half term. Our online assessment tool is used as an ongoing tool to record and track assessments. Adult led work is recorded in a topic learning journey, phonic writing book, maths journeys and in an independent writing book. Work is traffic lighted against the success criteria in line with the schools marking and feedback policy.

Learning journeys and independent writing books are shared with parents at parent consultation evenings and on occasion during weekly 'celebration' events where parents and carers are invited into the classroom to share in their child's learning. All assessment and records are passed to the child's new teacher at the end of the academic year as part of the transition process into year one. Children will also spend a morning session with their new teacher in their current classroom. Handover with year one staff include sharing information about the children's attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage as well as a plan for next steps for the teaching of reading, phonics, writing and maths. To support parents with transition into the national curriculum, parents are invited to a 'meet the teacher' information session to find out about learning within year one.

Parents of children entering the Foundation Stage are invited similarly to an information session and are given an outline of termly curriculum overviews and classroom routines. Staff in the Foundation Stage will visit the four main feeder preschools in the summer term prior to children starting in the autumn term. Events between the preschools and the school have been organised to help familiarise the children with their new settings such as 'lunchtime picnics'. Additional transitional visits are arranged for pupils and parents where necessary.

Parents are invited to a parent consultation evening twice throughout the year and will receive information about their child's progress against Development Matters age bands as well as the characteristics of effective learning. In addition, parents will receive a progress report at the end of the autumn and spring term which will show attainment through each area of learning against Development Matters and end of year targets for attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage. These reports also include characteristics of effective learning for each child.

At the end of the EYFS, parents will be sent an annual report that will outline their child's attainment for each area of learning, against, emerging, expected and exceeding criteria. Parents will also be given comments on each characteristic of effective learning with specific examples of learning being shared. The report will offer next steps where children have not met the expected level of attainment.

The role of parents

We believe that all parents and carers have an important role to play in the education of their child. We therefore recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this through:

- talking to parents about their child before their child starts in our school, through open mornings and information sessions led by the Head teacher
- where possible, visits by the teacher and teaching assistants to all feeder pre-schools prior to their starting school; additional transition visits are arranged for pupils and parents where necessary
- providing a handbook of information regarding commencing the Nursery and/or Reception year and the wraparound care available at Putnoe Primary
- Inviting parents to a 'meet the teacher' information session early in the autumn year to learn of curriculum routines and overviews, providing parents with a paper copy and an electronic version via the school website
- encouraging parents to talk to the child's teacher if there are any concerns; via our genuine 'open door policy'
- offering a range of activities, throughout the year, that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents;
- providing various activities that involve parents, through regular communication with home (including newsletters and reading diaries) and inviting parents to curriculum evenings and weekly 'celebration' events to share in their child's learning
- encouraging parents to contribute to the assessment of their child against all areas of learning by completing 'stars' to show activities participated in at home. Guidance for filling in the stars is sent home to support parents with examples of what could be evidenced. Completed 'stars' are then recorded into our electronic assessment tool and added to the child's learning journey.
- there is a formal meeting for parents in the autumn and spring terms at which the parents discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress each term and at the end of the academic year.

Resources

We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities. We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

We are able to offer children access to a fully stocked library and to our school environmental area where each class are responsible for growing fruits or vegetables; children are also involved in planting in the Early Years outdoor area. Children are timetabled to use the ICT suite for computing lessons and will have access to laptops and 'Innotabs' during independent and focused activities. PE lessons will be undertaken in the sports hall where a wide range of equipment is available as well as access to a large hall. The school has a media suite which enables children to produce radio and TV productions.

Transition

The following process is in place to ensure children's successful transition to school

