



Early Years Foundation Stage

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Contents

Rationale	2
Aims	2
Principles	3
Policy	3
Teaching, Learning and Play	3
Accommodation	6
Resources	6
Staffing	6
Assessment, recording and report	7
Parents and links with outside agencies	8

Rationale

Plans and the way they evolve to meet the children's needs are based upon providing a coherent programme of activities where children participate in active learning opportunities and experiences appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Plans are based on providing opportunities for children to participate in active learning experiences at their own level. Play, first hand experiences, talk and interaction with other children and adults are recognised as tools for moving children forward in their development.

We value education in the early years for itself and not only in preparation for the National Curriculum. We aim to ensure that our early years pupils are offered a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated experience in our setting which works towards achieving the Early Learning Goals and lays a firm foundation for later National Curriculum teaching.

Early Years staff will work together to ensure continuity and progression for every child.

Aims

We aim to:

- Take guidance from the Birth to 5 Matters document with regards to: a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and development.
- Acknowledge different starting points and developmental rates for all children and value each as an individual.
- Produce happy confident, enquiring children, who are interested in life and enthusiastic about challenges they encounter.
- Provide an exciting, stimulating and safe environment, which facilitates the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and concepts.
- Provide a foundation for future life in school by developing in children positive attitudes and disposition towards their learning.
- Provide opportunities which promote equal opportunities and where cultural diversity is valued.
- Maintain strong links with parents in order to take account of pre-school experiences and to support and encourage the children's achievements.
- Encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning and show that we value them as educators.
- Valuing inclusion as an important part of education which benefits all children.
- Present children with a structured programme of activities which foster their learning and promote the achievement of the early learning goals as follows :
 - personal social and emotional development
 - communication language and literacy
 - physical development
 - literacy
 - mathematics
 - understanding of the world

Principles

At Lipson Vale Primary School, it is our aim that:

- practitioners have a thorough knowledge of child development and understand how young children grow physically, emotionally, socially and educationally.
- practitioners ensure all children feel included, secure and valued and are treated equally.
- practitioners build positive relations with parents and work together with them.
- the Foundation experience builds on the children's previous experiences.
- our Early Years Curriculum is carefully structured, based on
 - individual starting points and needs
 - planned and purposeful activity that provides opportunities for teaching and learning (both indoors and outdoors)
- opportunities are given for the children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they play or initiate themselves.
- practitioners observe and respond appropriately to children, standing back and giving opportunity for self-initiated discussion or intervening whenever necessary to encourage their progress.
- we give our children a rich, stimulating, well planned and organised learning environment.

Policy Links

Relationships Policy (including exclusion)
Equality objectives
Accessibility plan
SEND
Admissions arrangements
Health and Safety
Child Protection and Safeguarding

Teaching, Learning & Play

Teaching

Teaching means systematically helping children to learn so that they are helped to make connections in their learning and are actively led forward, as well as helped to reflect on what they have already learnt. Teaching has many aspects, including planning and creating a learning environment, organising time and material resources, interacting, questioning, responding to questions, working with and observing children, assessing and recording children's progress and sharing knowledge gained with other practitioners and parents. The quality of each of these aspects of teaching is informed by the practitioners' knowledge and understanding of what is to be taught and how young children learn. Practitioners teach children in many ways.

Effective teaching requires:

- Working in partnership with parents, because parents continue to have a prime teaching role with their children.
- Promoting children's learning through planned experiences and activities that are challenging but achievable.
- Practitioners who model a range of positive behaviour.
- Using language that is rich and using correct grammar. Recognising that what is said and how the practitioner speaks is the main way of teaching new vocabulary and helping children to develop linguistic structures for thinking.
- Using conversation and carefully framed questions because this is crucial in developing children's knowledge. However, equally important is knowing when to stand back and allow the children to develop their independent learning skills.
- Direct teaching of skills and knowledge (for example 'Read Write Inc').
- Children teaching each other.
- Interacting with and supporting children in a way that positively affects the attitudes to learning that children develop.
- Planning the indoor and outdoor environment carefully to provide a positive context for learning and teaching.
- Skilful and well-planned observations of children to guide future planning.
- Assessing children's development and progress to serve several purposes. Assessment opportunities may be identified in planning or arise spontaneously.
- Using assessment to evaluate the quality of provision and practitioners training needs.

Learning

Learning for young children is a rewarding and enjoyable experience in which they explore, investigate, discover, create, practise, rehearse, repeat, revise and consolidate their developing knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes.

During the foundation stage, many of these aspects of learning are brought together effectively through playing and talking.

Effective learning involves:

- Children initiating activities that promote learning and enable them to learn from each other.
- Children learning through movement and using all their senses.
- Children having time to explore ideas and interests in depth in an (as far as possible) uninterrupted timetable.
- Children feeling secure which then helps them to become confident learners.
- Children learning in different ways and at different rates.
- Children making links in their learning.
- Creative and imaginative play activities that promote the development and use of language.

Play

Play is of vital importance to a child's learning and has been acknowledged in the Early Learning Goals' as "a key in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge."

Current theories of the relationship between playing and learning suggest the following connections:

- Play can facilitate learning by exposing children to new experiences, skills and knowledge.
- Play allows children to construct meaning from experience.
- Play has cognitive consolidating functions as it allows practice, rehearsal, repetition, mastery and extension.
- Intrinsic motivation is an important aspect of playing and learning and enables children to develop problem solving and sense making capacities.
- Play provides valuable opportunities for discipline-based learning (e.g. literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy) which connect children with distinctive ways of reasoning, understanding, controlling and making sense of the world.
- Play provides opportunities for children to use flexible, creative ways of thinking and acting.

Play is heavily promoted during the Early Years and it is recognised that children learn through all types of play:

- exploratory play e.g. sand, water, texture.
- creative play e.g. art and design, music activities.
- physical play to develop gross motor and fine motor skills e.g. climbing apparatus, scooters, tricycles, activities such as threading, jigsaws, peg boards.
- imaginative play e.g. role play, small world play, construction kit activities.
- spontaneous play e.g. role play, free play in sand and water.
- social play e.g. games, jigsaws, collaborative activities, free play.

Accommodation

The accommodation indoors should be :-

- bright, attractive, orderly and well ventilated.
- have areas with furniture which offer children the opportunity to be quiet, comfortable and relaxed as well as boisterous.
- have space that can be used for large scale building and play
- allow children to work at different levels e.g. floor, table, easel.

Outdoors the school provides :

- a secure area, with some shade available.
- a variety of different surfaces, textures and levels e.g. grass, paving, seating and planting.

Resources

Resources should include provision for indoor and outdoor learning. The resources should be safe, accessible to children, and an adequate number to support their learning.

Staffing

Our Early Years department has fully qualified staff.

Foundation Stage Coordinator	Chris Whittaker
Class teachers	Catherine Worth and Kathy Barras
Learning Support Assistants	Dianne Pope, Tara Smith and Julia Wannell

The Foundation Classes

The school follows the admission arrangements as laid down by the Local Authority. Children are currently admitted to the Foundation Stage in September.

The interaction of the teaching and support staff enables the children to become confident in a variety of situations and approaches to learning.

The roles of the Early Years staff

Foundation Stage Co-ordinator

- support, lead and evaluate planning
- support, lead and analyse Baseline Assessment
- ensure continuity, coverage, and progression
- lead and support target setting
- support all staff within Foundation Stage
- monitor all staff within Foundation Stage
- lead liaison within school and with all pre-schools
- keep parents informed at all levels e.g. day to day, curriculum requirements
- to ensure all Early Years staff have CPD on a regular basis.

Class Teacher

- plan for structured and non-structured play
- resource the play
- monitor the play
- assess the learning through play
- intervene sensitively
- extend the play
- connect the learning to real life experiences
- prepare pupils for numeracy and literacy
- to monitor and update children's individual Learning Journeys.

Learning Support Assistants

- support implementation of planning
- organise resources
- monitor the children during play and feedback to the class teacher

- intervene sensitively
- participate with the children
- observe children at play and record observations
- to monitor and update children's individual Tapestry Learning Journeys.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Assessment is an ongoing process that works towards the enrichment of a child's learning and is largely carried out by close observations of and discussion with individual children. All adults working in the foundation stage are involved in carrying out assessment.

The statutory requirement for assessment at this stage is to:

1. carry out assessment according to the scales within Early Years Foundation Stage document
2. send the results to the LEA
3. report the outcomes to parents

Assessment is also seen as a necessary aid to inform and consolidate planning.

Throughout the foundation stage we have identified key points for structured formative assessment, as well as our ongoing assessments. Photos are taken to provide evidence of learning taking place and observation sheets are completed during lengthier periods of observation. Everybody working/visiting the early years' classes are encouraged to make observations. The observations made are used to make judgements on a child's progression, to adapt class planning and are often used within each child's individual 'Tapestry Learning Journeys'.

Baseline assessment is a statutory requirement and we currently use our own paper based adaptation alongside the NFER online assessments. The information gleaned from Baseline is recorded and reported to parents, along with individual targets for each pupil. We have also included in the Baseline Assessment and the Learning Journeys the opportunity to keep an ongoing record of what the children can do in these areas:

- phonic acquisition
- ability to blend phonemes
- motor skills
- colour recognition
- knowledge of shape
- number recognition
- basic number manipulation

Ongoing assessment of the 6 areas of learning is completed at regular times throughout the foundation stage and to glean the information we need we use the Tapestry online learning journal to do this.

Reporting to parents

Written reports are given to parents towards the end of the foundation stage, and transfer reports are sent when a child changes school, to the receiving school.

Initial enrolment is carried out by the Headteacher. While the children are attending part-time during the three weeks, all parents are invited to a meeting with the class teacher to consider the findings of the Baseline Assessment and to set initial targets. Subsequent meetings with parents/carers take place later in the school year .

Parents and links with outside agencies

"Parents are the most central and influential key adults in a child's life" (Climbing Frames 1997). The Early Years Team recognises this fact and welcomes the opportunity to work together with parents thus developing an effective partnership. We believe that a two way exchange of information is paramount to ensure a successful partnership.

At school:

- All parents are involved from the beginning when their children are visited at home. The aim is to establish a strong one to one relationship, meeting the needs of all parents and children.
- Parents are also invited to a 'new entrants meeting' which takes place during the term before the child starts school.
- The ethos of the school promotes a range of different opportunities for collaboration between children, parents and practitioners - see School Prospectus.
- Visits by children from 'Bobtails' Nursery and by school staff to 'Bobtails' and other Pre-School settings are encouraged.

Informal access to class teachers takes place every morning (8.45 – 8.55) when parents/carers are welcome to meet the teacher to discuss relevant issues. Children in the Foundation stage are invited to start school between 8.45 – 8.55.

At the start of the Autumn term parents/carers are invited to participate in a reading and writing workshop which hopefully helps them understand how difficult these skills are to learn and how they can best help their child at home.

Each child has a home/school reading diary where teachers, children and parents can comment about the books being taken home

Parents are encouraged to use the Tapestry app to record their child's experiences at home, such as photos and comments that are included in their personal 'Learning Journey'.

Parents are encouraged to participate in regular reading sessions at home to support children with the development of their child's reading skills as well as their confidence with reading.

Later in the year children are encouraged to take home a Home Writing book where a written dialogue between teacher and child are carried out weekly.

The Early Years team may involve outside agencies (such as speech and language, educational psychologist, school liaison police officer, school nurse) to enhance the provision made for individual pupils, groups or whole classes.