



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

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Introduction

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years learning and teaching in Blanche Nevile Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill 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.”

“Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage”, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Blanche Nevile we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education. The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At SGP&CC the EYFS applies to children attending from the age of two years to the end of the Reception year when they are five years of age.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Blanche Nevile the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five **“Every Child Matters”** outcomes. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his/her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and learning

and teaching is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates. At Blanche Nevile we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring 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 future learning and development;
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment;
- 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/guardians and value their contributions;
- ensure that all children feel valued, respected and included and that classroom resources and activities reflect the culture and language of their homes.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A Unique Child**
- **Positive Relationships**
- **Enabling Environments**
- **Learning and Development**

A Unique child

Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school and Children's Centre.

We believe that children should be treated as individuals but they should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement.

The school's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to practitioners and parents, and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary.

For further information see our Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Gifted and Talented Policies.

Positive Relationships

At Blanche Nevile we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents/guardians are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/guardians and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

Key person

Young children need to develop relationships to support their emotional well-being and learning. A key working approach provides the child with a special adult to enable him/her to develop a secure attachment, the opportunity for the practitioner to develop a supportive relationship with the parents/carers and share the child's progress and development. Every child in the EYFS has a named key person.

Enabling Environments

At Blanche Nevile we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside environment. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning is informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, experiences, development and learning needs.

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

The school Nursery and Reception classes currently organise the curriculum through agreed half/termly topics over the period of the academic year. The topics cover areas that are familiar, of interest to young children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The long term cycle planning reflects a balance of the six areas of learning and development from the EYFS.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities, and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

The weekly plan is informed in two ways. Firstly, through on going observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. Through this, learning objectives for the next short term plan are identified. It is informed secondly by referring to the medium term plans containing objectives and activities/experiences in the half/termly topic.

When planning for Communication, Language and Literacy and Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy in the Reception classes we follow the early learning goals and additional statements set out in the "Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics"

(Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006)

Assessment and Recordkeeping

We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning, and then make informed decisions about supporting the child's progress. This enables us to plan the next steps for individuals and groups of children by providing challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend the children's learning. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Staff review the tracking data termly with the EYFS Leader/Senior Leadership Team, monitoring rates of progress and identifying strategies that address learning and teaching priorities and next steps.

Formative assessment

This type of assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles. Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal and focused narrative observations, other targeted assessments, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents. We plan for observational assessment when undertaking short term planning.

Summative assessment

In the nursery the Haringey Early Years Profile (HEYP) is used to summarise and record evidence from formative assessments and provides the basis of the end of year report (Foundation Stage Record of Achievement) that is shared with parents.

During the Reception year the children are assessed against the EYFS Profile. This is a Nationally employed assessment tool. The EYFS profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It gives:

- The child's attainment in relation to the 17 early learning goals (ELG) descriptors
- A short narrative describing the child's 3 characteristics of effective learning

Practitioners' assessments are primarily based on observing a child's daily activities and events. In particular, practitioners note the learning which a child demonstrates spontaneously, independently and consistently in a range of contexts. We understand that

accurate assessment takes into account a range of perspectives. Therefore we include those of the child, parents and other adults who have significant interactions with the child.

Learning and Development

At Blanche Nevile we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Learning and Teaching

Effective learning and teaching is supported through:

- the partnership between staff and parents that helps our children to feel secure at school and the children's Centre, and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement;
- the understanding that staff have knowledge 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, including the effective use of ICT;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

Play and Exploration

"Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development."

("Early Years Foundation Stage", Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007)

At Blanche Nevile we do not make a distinction between work and play. We support children's learning through planned play activities, through observation of child-initiated or adult-led play activities and then provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication, Language and Literacy**
- **Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**
- **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**
- **Physical Development**
- **Creative Development**

While these six areas provide a framework for the early years curriculum, young children's learning does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over several of the six areas at any one time. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Role of Parents/Carers

The Foundation Stage team strongly believe that developing an effective working partnership with parents/carers has a positive impact on children's development and learning.

We value parents/carers by:

- showing respect and understanding for the role of parents/carers as children's first and most enduring educator.
- encouraging parents/carers to share accounts of their child's development and any concerns they may have and take action to support where appropriate.
- providing a welcoming environment by being approachable and friendly. Establishing an atmosphere of trust and confidence.
- inviting parents/carers to initial meetings to share information about their children and about our school.
- sharing information about the curriculum through meetings e.g. reading meeting for the reception parent/carers, sending newsletters/leaflets home about topics, displays, informal discussions, class and general boards sharing plans and other school and community information.
- providing opportunities for parents/carers to attend social events with children and staff e.g. breakfast morning.
- inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests and time to work with and help the children and staff in a variety of ways.
- meeting with parents/carers each term to share children's achievements and together discuss next steps for development.
- encouraging home school links through support with the home school reading programme.
- invitations to assemblies and other whole school events
- by being available at the beginning and end of the day to talk to parents/carers on an informal basis. If further time is needed to discuss particular issues an appointment can be arranged at a mutually convenient.

Play

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children's lives. It is an important way skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children's learning and development.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Role of the adult

- To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for their interests and needs.
- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
- To support children's learning through planned play activity.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play