



Beech Green Primary School

Respect Achieve Belong

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Beech Green, children join Reception in the year that they turn five. We believe that the Early Years Foundation Stage encompasses all learning and is the basis upon which children build the rest of their lives. At the heart of all we do is in agreement with the following quote:

‘Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years, and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.’

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2024)

Aims

- To provide access to a broad and balanced curriculum that gives children the range of knowledge and skills needed for good progress through school and life.
- To take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child in order to plan both enjoyable and challenging experiences in all areas of learning.
- To provide learning opportunities that are relevant and of interest to the children, and to also provide opportunities for learning to become embedded.
- To safeguard all children by following school procedures as part of our duty of care.
- To encourage all children to become effective learners by reflecting on and responding to their characteristics of learning.
- To ensure every child is included and supported through equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.
- To establish a close working partnership between staff and parents and/or carers.

The following four guiding principles shape our practice:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships**
- Children learn and develop well in **enabling environments**, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** This takes all children into account, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Legislation

This policy is based on the requirements set out in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) that applies from January 2024.

The EYFS Curriculum

We provide an exciting and challenging curriculum based on our observation of children's needs, interests, and stages of development across the seven areas of learning to enable the children to achieve the Early Learning Goals. All the seven areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

The prime areas are particularly important for igniting curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building children's capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive.

The Prime areas are:

- Communication and Language
- Physical Development
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

The specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Children are provided with a range of meaningful first-hand experiences in which they actively explore and think creatively. We aim to develop and foster positive attitudes towards learning, confidence, communication and physical development.

We focus learning around children's interests. What interests the children is important to us and is reflected within our provision. We use observations of children's independent practice, their conversations and their responses to adult directed activities to inform our next steps in learning.

Principles underpinning teaching within the Foundation Stage

“Play is essential for children’s development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, relate to others, set their own goals and solve problems. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults.”
(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2024)

Play is a medium through which effective learning takes place and becomes embedded. It is recognised that learning not only takes place through planned play activities but also as a result of a child’s self-initiated play based on their own experiences and interests. We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are directed by adults. As the children develop over the course of their Reception year, the number of adult directed activities will increase.

During children’s play, we interact in order to stretch and challenge children's understanding further and also to model and extend vocabulary. In planning and supporting children's activities, we consider the different ways that children learn and then reflect these in our practice. We create a stimulating environment to encourage children to free-flow between both the indoor and outdoor classrooms.

We have developed our curriculum to give communication and language skills a high priority. The use of spoken language underpins all of the areas of learning and so it is essential that the children are exposed to a language rich environment where high quality conversations are modelled and become the norm.

The teaching of reading is a high priority, alongside fostering a love of books. Books are used to teach topics and to enhance our whole curriculum. We follow a systematic approach to phonics teaching using the Read, Write Inc. programme.

Effective Teaching Strategies

Children learn in different ways; we support children to reach their full potential by considering the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

These are:

- **playing and exploring** - children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’;
- **active learning** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

(Statutory framework for the EYFS 2024)

The Environment

Our Reception Unit consists of both indoor and outdoor classrooms. These are purposeful, happy and engaging spaces which support the children's needs and interests in a stimulating and multi-sensory manner.

In order to best optimise the development and learning of our children, we ensure that our unit is a language rich environment. All staff, including our 'Play Partners' actively support and encourage the children to speak in full sentences and also to extend their vocabulary during their 'Choice and Challenge' time. The children thrive and develop their communication, language and social skills during the open-ended play opportunities where children are actively encouraged to work together.

Time outside is essential; the children have regular Forest School sessions and daily access to OPAL. These areas in particular allow the children to engage in energetic, risky and adventurous play with the support of adults.

Assessment

We undertake baseline assessments during the first term in Reception. The children are assessed using a mixture of the statutory government baseline (RBA) and also through teacher and Teaching Partner observations. Information gathered from parents and pre-school settings, including Transition Records, all contribute to this baseline. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

We monitor the children's attainment throughout the year as to whether they are 'On Track' or 'Not on Track' against statements within the 'Progressions Towards the New Early Learning Goals & Beyond' document. Assessment takes the form of both formal and informal observations and through planned activities. Assessment is regularly completed and involves both the teachers, Teaching Partners and parents/carers. Assessments are used to inform future planning. As a Reception Team, we support the children to 'keep up, not catch up' in a variety of ways such as intervention groups, sharing targets with parents/carers, sharing next steps on Tapestry with parents/carers etc.

At the end of the year, children are assessed at either an emerging level or an expected level in each of the 17 early learning goals. This information is used to determine whether a child has or has not reached a 'Good Level of Development'. An end of year report is written which is shared with parents. This highlights the child's strengths and also areas for development. Assessments are passed on to Year One teachers to enable them to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Parents/carers as Partners

We believe that parents/ carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make not only to their child's learning, but also the assessment of it. We work in partnership with parents/carers in a variety of ways including:

- Providing opportunities for parents to contribute to their child's Learning Journey throughout the year, for example, through the use of our online Learning Journal called Tapestry, parents meetings and our 'open door' communication.
- Regularly sharing Targets with parents/carers.
- Inviting parents/carers into the Reception Unit for either 'Stay & Play' sessions, workshops or to look at work.
- Extending parent/carers knowledge by holding meetings on topics such as Phonics, Maths, EYFS. Also providing 'support' videos on Tapestry.
- Keeping parent/carers informed of their child's progress using Tapestry including 'Next Steps'. Holding Parent's meetings.

Transitions

Carefully planned transitions are essential to ensure continuity of learning, we believe that children learn best when they feel happy and safe. As the children begin their Reception journey, we acknowledge the child's needs and establish effective partnerships with those involved with the child, including other settings such as nurseries and childminders. Events such as family picnics and 'Stay and Play' sessions help to make school a more familiar, fun place, together with getting to know new adults. Home doorstep visits allow staff to meet the children in their safe environment. Essential information is collected and shared, together with an opportunity for any questions to be answered and for vital parent/carer and teacher partnerships to be formed.

Transition into Key Stage one is also essential. Time is prioritised to allow the children to become familiar with their new classrooms and adults. This takes the form of, for example, story swap with their new adults, a day spent in their new class before the summer break etc.

Health and Safety

The Statutory Framework for Early Years 2024 states that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements:

- To provide welcoming, safe and stimulating setting, where children can grow in confidence.
- To promote good health, including oral hygiene. Preventing the spread of infection and taking appropriate action when children are ill.
- To provide healthy, snacks and drinks whilst being aware of special dietary requirements and allergies.

- Maintain clear and regular communication with parents/carers.
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's individual needs and stage of development.
- To ensure that all adults who look after the children are suitable to do so.
- Ensure that the setting is safe, this includes ensuring that furniture and equipment being fit for purpose.
- Maintain records, policies and procedures to ensure the needs of all the children are met together with the safe and efficient management of the setting.

The children's safety and welfare is of paramount importance to us. Our curriculum teaches children about making safe choices and assessing risks. By encouraging the children to take risks, we are able to teach them how to recognise and avoid hazards in order to keep themselves safe. The children are taught about boundaries and rules and the need for them. Not only do we promote the good health of the children in our care, we actively teach the children why it is important to make healthy choices with regards to their physical and mental well being. This is undertaken in numerous ways eg: Healthy snacks and water are available throughout the day. The children are encouraged to become more aware of their physical needs and are encouraged to become more independent when accessing the toilets. The children are encouraged to regularly wash their hands. Set procedures are followed when children have an accident or become ill.

Special Educational Needs & Disability

As stated in the SEN policy

“Beech Green school values the contribution that every child can make and welcomes the diversity of culture, religion and intellectual style. The school seeks to raise the achievement, remove barriers to learning and increase physical and curricular access for all. All children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are valued, respected and equal members of the school. As such provision for pupils with SEND is a matter for the school as a whole.”