



THE GREEN LEEK FEDERATION

EARLY YEARS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

Early Years education is the foundation upon which young children build the rest of their school life learning. It is a holistic education that encompasses all learning and development.

The Foundation Stage applies to children from three years of age to the end of the Reception year. The responsibility for the implementation of the Foundation Stage is therefore shared between the school and the Pre-School providers. Children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five and enter the Reception class. Key Stage 1 follows at the beginning of Year 1.

The Early Years curriculum includes those activities which are planned and those activities that are incidental. The curriculum is provided to meet the needs of children in the Foundation Stage is informed by Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage EYFS (2012). The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of most children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of Early Years teachings and learning in Reception at All Saints' and Burton Green. It reflects the practice in all areas of the provision.

2. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

A Unique Child - every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships - children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments - the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development - children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and in all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

The development of the whole child is important - social, emotional, physical, intellectual and interrelated. Therefore it is also important that learning is holistic and for the young child is not compartmentalised under subject headings.

- Intrinsic motivation is valuable because it results in child initiated learning
- Independence and self-discipline are emphasised
- Children learn most effectively through first hand experience
- It builds on what our children already know and can do
- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children and activity that provides opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors
- It provides a rich and stimulating learning environment

3. AIMS OF THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The curriculum of the Foundation Stage underpins all future learning. The seven areas of learning provide the framework for the planning of a curriculum for children under 5.

Full details of the Early Learning Goals can be found in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework September 2012.

The curriculum is centred on 3 prime areas of learning.

a) Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Through a range of experiences and support we enable children to develop a positive sense of themselves and of others. Practitioners give particular attention to:

- Establish constructive relationships with peers and adults
- Giving positive encouragement to children
- Planning opportunities for children to work alone and in large and small groups
- Providing time and space for children to choose activities to develop their own interests
- Planning activities that develop all aspects of the child
- Planning activities that empower children to take control of some aspects of their own learning
- Providing positive images that encourage them to embrace diversity in gender, ethnicity, religion, special educational needs and disabilities
- Acknowledge children's particular beliefs and cultural backgrounds in play and learning.
- Encourage independence skills
- Provide support for social and emotional development of vulnerable children

b) Communication and Language

Children are encouraged to develop and use communication, speaking and listening skills in different situations and for different purposes.

Practitioners give particular attention to:

- Providing opportunities to communicate thoughts, ideas and feelings
- Incorporate communication skills across all areas of learning
- Linking language to physical movement - action songs, role play
- Reflecting the importance of language in the learning environment
- Providing time for spoken communication
- Planning opportunities for children to become aware of language and writing systems other than English
- Early identification of difficulties in language development
- Opportunities for children who use alternative communication systems to develop their skills

Literacy

- Sharing rhymes, music, poetry, stories and non-fiction books
- Modelling writing for children and providing opportunities to experiment with writing
- Use their developing phonic knowledge to write simple regular words
- Read a range of familiar, common words and simple sentence independently and develop a love for reading

c) Mathematics

This area of learning includes counting, sorting, matching, seeking patterns, making connections, recognising relationships and working with numbers, shapes and measures.

Practitioners give particular attention to:

- Drawing out mathematical learning across the curriculum
- Practical activities underpinned by children's development of their communication skills
- Making learning fun
- Supporting children who use a means of communication other than English
- Observing, assessing and planning next stage of learning

Providers must also support activities through 3 specific areas which strengthen the prime areas.

a) Understanding the World

Opportunities in this area of learning enable children to make sense of the world.

Practitioners pay particular attention to:

- Activities based on first - hand experience
- A learning environment with a wide range of materials indoors and outdoors
- Opportunities that help children develop awareness of differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion and culture and of special educational needs and disability issues
- Supporting and communicating and recording skills
- Supplementary experience and information for children with sensory impairment

B) Physical Development

Physical development improves skills of coordination, control, manipulation and movement.

Practitioners pay particular attention to:

- Planning activities with appropriate physical challenge
- Providing space to set up activities
- Giving time for children to use equipment
- Providing resources to support specific skills
- Introducing language of movement
- Providing time for children with physical disabilities to develop physical skills
- Use adults to support individuals
- Developing and understanding of the importance of physical activity and making healthy choices in relation to food

b) Expressive Arts and Design

This area of learning includes art, music, dance, imaginative & role play activities and design and technology.

Practitioners pay particular attention to providing:

- A stimulating environment where creativity is valued
- A wide range of activities that children respond to using all their senses
- Time for children to explore, develop and finish working at their ideas
- Opportunities for children to express their ideas in different ways
- Resources from a range of cultures
- Opportunities to work alongside artists
- Opportunities for the visually impaired children to have physical contact with artefacts, materials, spaces and movements
- Opportunities for hearing impaired children to experience sound through physical contact with materials
- Opportunities for children who cannot communicate by voice to respond to music using gestures
- Accommodating specific religious or cultural beliefs relating to art or methods of representation

4. TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE

Practitioners ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued.

The Early Years curriculum is carefully structured to enable children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Practitioners understand that children develop rapidly during the early years -

physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Planning starts with what the child can do and builds upon this. Planning is based on teachers understanding of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching.

Children participate in a range of activities that provide first hand experiences, give their clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and talk or other means of communication.

Provision is made for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities. Children are encouraged to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;

Some of these activities are teacher directed. The teacher introduces the child to a specific skill, knowledge or concept and directed teaching takes place.

Some activities are teacher led. The teacher provides a structured environment or activity, observes the child and intervenes appropriately to support learning, extend knowledge, skills and understanding, and to engage children in the learning process.

Some activities are child initiated. Within a structured, learning environment the child makes decisions and choices about the activities he wishes to undertake.

Practitioners observe and respond appropriately to children. Regular observations are carried out and notes recorded in the children's individual Learning Journals.

Learning is supported with appropriate and accessible indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment.

5. EARLY YEARS STAFF

Staff working in the Foundation Stage are trained specialists in Early Years. The Early Years Coordinator is responsible for planning and delivering the curriculum. She is supported by a Teaching Assistant. Early Years qualified adults may work in the Early Years setting with SEN children.

6. CLASSROOM ORGANISATION

The Foundation Stage is located in Oak class as All Saints and Maple Class at Burton Green with direct access to a secure, outside activity area and a covered area. Provision is made inside and outside to support the seven areas of learning. It includes a writing area, book corner, role play areas, creative areas, construction areas and opportunities for physical play. Equipment is well organised and accessible to children.

7. PARENTS AS PARTNERS

We seek to develop an effective partnership with parents by sharing information and offering support to extend the learning experience into the home environment.

Parents are the first and continuing educators of their children. Practitioners show respect and understanding of the role parents play by inviting them to contribute regularly in their child's Learning Journals.

The Early Years Coordinator is available to visit parents and children at home at their invitation, at the beginning of the Autumn Term. During this visit she will listen to the parent's accounts of their child's development and any concerns they have.

All parents are made to feel welcome, valued and necessary through a range of opportunities to work together. Children take reading materials home and a home - school reading diary is provided to support communication. Parents are used to support learning opportunities in the classroom and on visits. Parents are asked to complete a 'significant event' slip to add to their child's 'Learning Journey' record.

Children are encouraged to bring items from home to support learning in school and to describe personal home based experiences as starting points for learning.

Parents are kept informed of their child's progress through informal, regular discussion and through planned parents' evenings.

Parents are also invited to get involved with school life. There are opportunities for them to help with activities such as educational visits and reading, as well as offering their particular skills (e.g. cooking, art, music) to support children's learning. Parents may be invited into the setting on other occasions such as open afternoons where children show them their work and special events such as Mother's Days.

The setting has a friendly, open-doors ethos and practitioners are available to talk to parents at the end of the day. Parents are always welcomed into school and are encouraged to discuss any concerns they might have.

8. THE FOUNDATION STAGE CURRICULUM

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage in our school reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document. The experiences that our children meet often enable them to develop a number of competencies, skills and concepts across several areas of learning.

As the children are placed in mixed Reception/Year 1 class, they have a daily mathematics and literacy focussed sessions.

The EYFS curriculum provides the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Our medium term planning identified the intended learning to support children towards achieving the Early Learning Goals.

9. PLAY

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

Play is the process through which children learn and is an integral part of activities in the Foundation Stage. Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as their own. They communicate with other as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Play is a powerful motivator which encourages children to be creative and to develop their ideas, understanding and language. Play is also flexible and able to suit the preferred learning style of the child. It can provide multiple ways for children to learn a variety of different skills and concepts.

Opportunities for structured play are planned throughout the school day. A balance of teacher initiated, teacher supported and child initiated activities are experienced by all children.

Areas to encourage imaginative, physical, creative and construction play activities are resourced inside and outside the school building.

10. ASSESSMENT

We make regular observations and 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, and this involves the teacher and other adults as appropriate.

During the children's first half-term in the Reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child and a Baseline Assessment is carried out. We use our observations to identify patterns of attainment within the

cohort of children. We use this information to modify the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children. We share the information with parents at the parental consultation meeting in October.

The teacher continually updates this assessment during the child's reception year and records each child's attainment level. The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. We share this information with parents at the parental consultation meeting in July. The results of the assessments are sent to the Local Authority for analysis in the Autumn and Summer terms.

Parents receive an annual report that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. Comments on the characteristics of how each child learns and plays will be made on the annual report. We complete these in June and send them to parents in early July each year.

11. INCLUSION IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet 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 achieve this by planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those of diverse linguistic backgrounds, so that every child is included and not disadvantaged.

We meet the needs of all our children through:

- 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 strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Providing a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Using resources which reflect diversity and are free from 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 taking action to provide support as necessary.

Being alert to the early signs of needs that could lead to later difficulties and responding quickly and appropriately, involving other agencies as appropriate. Liaising with Pre-school providers as entry into Reception is important to build up a picture of the unique child.

12. INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS

The aim of our induction arrangements is to enable all children and their parents to feel secure, confident and at ease with the transition to school life. We are mindful of the individual needs of the children, the needs of their parents and families, previous foundation stage experiences and the needs of a mixed age group Reception/Year 1 class.

Places are offered for September admissions in April each year. Parents are invited to an induction meeting when they are provided with appropriate information giving details about starting school. Children are invited to a series of opportunities during June to become familiar with the classroom, peers and adults. Informal visits to open assemblies and summer term activities are encouraged.

Home visits are available if required by the Early Years Coordinator to enable parents to have the opportunity to discuss individual needs and aspirations.

Children are admitted to the Reception Class on a part-time basis. This is structured to provide a gradual introduction.

Year 5/ 6 act as buddies at lunchtime supporting the younger children through the routines of eating lunch and playing outside.

The induction process is carefully monitored by the Early Years Coordinator who liaises with parents if additional support is appropriate.

13. LIAISON WITH PRE SCHOOL PROVIDERS

The school endeavours to establish relationships with a wide range of settings that may provide pre-school experiences for children admitted from early years settings into our schools. During the summer term, visits are arranged, if appropriate and assessment records passed onto the class teacher.

14. REFERENCE MATERIALS

Statutory Framework for the EYFS September 2012
Green Leek SEN Policy September 2014

Review Date: March 2015

Next Review: March 2018