



BREACHWOOD GREEN SCHOOL

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Believe and Achieve

Introduction

At Breachwood Green JMI School children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five. We believe that even the youngest of children benefit from being in school at the start of the academic year. In highly exceptional circumstances, summer born children may start in the January before their fifth birthday if not ready to start in September (Compulsory schooling begins at the start of the term after a child's fifth birthday).

The Foundation Stage is important in its own right, preparing children for later schooling. The Early Learning Goals set out what is expected of the children by the end of the Foundation Stage.

As outlined in the EYFS: *'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.'*

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy: Admissions Guidelines, Health and Safety Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy; Behaviour Policy; Child protection and Safeguarding, Assessment and Curriculum.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework

Teaching in the EYFS is delivered in accordance with the government's statutory document, 'The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage'. This document is a principled approach to Early Years education, bringing together children's welfare, learning and development requirements through four themes:

- Every child is a **unique child**, 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.**

Principles into practice

As part of our practice we:

- Provide a balanced curriculum, based on the EYFS, across the seven areas of learning, using play as the vehicle for learning;
- Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. We provide early intervention for those children who require additional support;
- Work in partnership with parents and within the wider context;
- Plan challenging and exciting learning experiences, based on the individual child, informed by observation and assessment;

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- Provide opportunities for children to engage in activities that are adult-initiated and child-initiated, supported by the adult;
- Provide a secure and safe learning environment indoors and out.
- Deliver an enriched, well-designed curriculum with opportunities to engage in gardening, woodwork and food preparation

Curriculum Intent

At Breachwood Green our aim is to create a learning environment and build relationships which support, enhance and invite a curiosity, confidence and a positive attitude towards learning regardless of backgrounds, circumstances or needs of the children in our setting. We aim to broaden experiences and provide opportunities to try new things, immersing them in rich language and first-hand learning. We aim to work collaboratively with parents and carers to encourage independent, enthusiastic learners who thrive and reach their full potential. It is our intent that children who enter our EYFS begin their lifelong learning journey by developing physically, verbally, cognitively and emotionally whilst also embedding a positive attitude to school and a love of learning.

To ensure children make good progress in Class 1, our EYFS curriculum is designed to encourage independent, inquisitive and happy learners. We aim to work with parents and previous setting to learn as much as we can about the children before they join us on their learning journey. We recognise the children's prior learning and various starting points, and aim to create a balanced curriculum that maximizes cross curricular links. Following personal interests and individual needs, allows us to plan and provide opportunities throughout our EYFS curriculum to support learning and development and achieve their next steps. We offer quality enriching experiences and the opportunity to work with supportive adults on food preparation, woodwork and gardening projects. We foster an appreciation of the natural world and the planet and animals who share our planet with us.

It is our intent to ensure that all children will receive the teaching of early reading through systematic, synthetic phonics to learn to read words and simple sentences accurately by the end of Reception.

We recognise that as a result of COVID many of our children have missed out on spending time in pre-school settings, socialising and enjoying wider experiences with their families. It is our intent to build positive and supportive relationships and provide the support and guidance they need to flourish in school, including sharing, working with others, listening and concentrating and being patient.

The "Characteristics of Effective Learning" are at the heart of the Early Years Curriculum and explore the different ways in which children learn. They highlight the importance of playing and learning, active learning and thinking critically. All the learning experiences we plan for the children allow them to utilise and develop these skills. Our learning environments, both inside and outside, are stimulating and exciting, and relevant to the needs and age/stage of our children."

During the Foundation Stage, three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are the **prime** areas:

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

Children are also supported through the four **specific** areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. These **specific** areas are:

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

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

The class teachers plan a series of topics which offer experiences in all seven areas of learning and meet the interests and development needs of the children. These plans then inform the short-term weekly planning, alongside our observations, which remain flexible for unplanned circumstances or children's responses.

Children experience whole group and small group learning opportunities, which increase formality as they progress through the EYFS. We deliver a daily phonics session adapting the 'Letters and Sounds' approach. Our curriculum is delivered using a play-based approach as outlined by the EYFS:

'Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.'

Time is carefully managed to ensure there is a balance between children having the time and space to engage in their own child-initiated learning and activities which are planned and led by adults. During child-initiated learning, the early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children to take their learning forward, believing that play is an effective vehicle through which children can acquire, practise, rehearse knowledge and skills. Our carefully planned learning environment provides open-ended provocation and resources to allow children to practise, rehearse and develop the skills they have been taught and to pursue their own interests.

Observation and Assessment

At Breachwood Green JMI school we follow The Development Matters, Non-statutory curriculum guidance early years foundation stage September 2020. It states

'Assessment: checking what children have learnt

- *Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.*

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- *Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.*
- *Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.*
- *Before assessing children, it's a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful.*
- *Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.*

It is vital that we get to know and value all young children. All children learn more in the period from birth to five years old than any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them to catch up and keep up is in the early years.'

Our EYFS team will work with parents and previous settings to ensure a smooth transition into school. We work with settings to encourage the completion of the Hertfordshire **Unique child transition level of need tool** and transition records. These are used to identify vulnerable children and barriers to learning.

Upon entry to Class 1, staff will complete the Statutory National Baseline. The first weeks of school are spent getting to know the children and ensuring that they feel happy and secure.

Practitioners will gather and collate evidence of development and learning from a range of sources including learning journeys, documentation passed up from previous settings, direct observation, focused activities and liaison with parents. Information gathered from previous settings will be used where practitioners are confident this triangulates what has been observed in class. Children are assessed in number recognition and letter sound recognition and early phonic skills. This information is used to inform planning.

Practitioners use the Development Matters pathways to assess each child's level of development. These assessments help practitioners to make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next. The guidance is to be used to check that children are secure in all the earlier steps of learning before they look at their 'age band'. We believe that depth in learning matters much more than moving from one band to the next or trying to cover everything. We understand that a child's learning is secure if they show it consistently and in a range of different contexts. For example, it is important to give a child many opportunities to deepen their understanding of numbers up to five .

Assessment on Entry to our setting

EXS – a child is considered to be developing at the expected stage if they are working consistently and in a range of different contexts within the 3-4 year old age band e.g. demonstrates over 75% of statements on entry.

WTS – a child is considered to be working towards age expectations if they are demonstrating typical behaviours within the 3-4 year old age band and demonstrating less than 75% of statements on entry.

PRE – a child is considered to be working pre-curriculum if they demonstrate behaviours described in the birth-3 year old age band on entry.

GDS – a child is considered to be working at greater depth if they consistently and independently demonstrate over 50% of statements within the reception age band on entry.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. Observations take place on a daily basis (both formally and informally). Practitioners make time to carry out planned observations of individuals and groups of children regularly. They also make spontaneous observations in order to capture significant moments of children's learning. All practitioners are involved in observing children. Practitioners use observations to support their developing knowledge of individual children. It informs them of children's abilities, needs, interests and learning styles. Observations are evaluated, children's learning priorities are identified and relevant learning opportunities are planned to support children to make the next steps and progress and identify those needing additional support.

Learning Journeys document children's progress over the academic year in all areas of learning and development of the EYFS framework and help capture significant moments in their learning. As practitioners, we use our knowledge of the children and child development to quickly identify opportunities to provide support and challenge. At the end of the academic year we submit the statutory assessment against the Early Learning Goals.

The parents and guardians are given the opportunity to meet termly with the Foundation Stage Team. We provide a written summary in relation to the children's early learning goals and the Characteristics of Effective Learning to parents and guardians at the end of the academic year.

The Early Years teachers will attend moderation cluster meetings. Internal moderation takes place during the Early Years Team meetings.

Key Person

The key person approach is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between children and practitioners. Attachment provides a sense of security so that children can become confident, independent and capable young learners.

At our school, the part-time class teachers jointly share the role of the key person. Their role is to meet the needs of each child within their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, talking to the parents and working in partnership with them. They work in close partnership with the other practitioners operating within the setting.

Safety

The children's safety and welfare is paramount. We create a safe and secure environment and provide a curriculum, which teaches children how to be safe, make choices and assess

risks. We have stringent policies, procedures and documents in place to ensure children's safety and wellbeing.

We promote the good health of the children in our care in numerous ways, including the provision of fruit and following set procedures when children become ill or have an accident. We adhere to the statutory welfare requirements as detailed in the Early Years Foundation stage documentation.

Independence

We aim for all our children to be self-sufficient and independent learners. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their own belongings including their PE kits and personal hygiene. Our curriculum is designed to promote independence and responsibility. Children learn to select the resources and equipment they need, use them safely and tidy away after themselves.

Inclusion

We value all our children as individuals at Breachwood Green School, irrespective of their ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, background, ability or gender. We plan a curriculum that meets the needs of the individual child and supports them at their own pace. We strongly believe that early identification of children with additional needs is crucial in enabling us to give the child the support that they need and in doing so, work closely with parents and outside agencies.

Parents as Partners and the Wider context

We strive to create and maintain positive partnerships with parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning and well-being. We welcome and actively encourage parents to participate confidently in their child's education. There are opportunities for parents to share in their children's learning journeys and we encourage them to contribute by sharing "Wow Moments" from home.

Working with other services and organisations is integral to our practice in order to meet the needs of our children. At times we may need to share information with other professionals to provide the best support possible.

We draw on our links with the community to enrich children's experiences by taking them on outings and inviting members of the community into our setting.

The Induction Process

Parents of new Reception Year children are invited to a meeting during the summer term to support with the transition process and complete the Hertfordshire Unique Child Transition Level of Need Tool. During this, parents are informed about the child's first year at Breachwood Green School and the transition process. They are given the opportunity to visit the classroom and ask questions of staff, parents and governors.

In addition to this, during the Summer Term, prior to starting school in the following September, the following visits are conducted:

- Foundation stage staff will visit pre-school providers and settings from which September's intake will be taken;
- Parents may request a home visit where a member of the foundation staff will visit their child in their home environment;
- Each child attends two morning sessions to familiarise themselves with the setting;
- Parents/carers are invited to join the children for lunch on one occasion.
- Additional transition/induction arrangements are made for children identified as having a higher level of need.

Transitions

We liaise with parents and the previous settings/provider to ensure a smooth transition into our school. We encourage the previous settings and parents to share the children's assessment records and learning journeys with us as part of our baseline assessment procedures.

In the final term, the Year 1 teacher will meet with the Early Years staff and discuss each child's development against the Early Learning Goals in order to support a smooth transition to Year 1. This discussion helps the Year 1 teacher to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet the needs of all children.

Governing Body committee responsible: Curriculum and Standards Committee

Review frequency: every two years

Based on: Policy from Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) at Herts County Council

Signed Chair of Governors: *T Starkey*

Date: 24.03.2022

Signed Vice Chair of C & S: *K Badham*

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