

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) policy



Approved by:	Headteacher
Written By:	Stephanie Nourish
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1. Aims

At Brixworth primary School we aim to provide the highest quality care and education for all our children thereby giving them a strong foundation for their future learning. We create a safe and happy environment with motivating and enjoyable learning experiences that enable children to become confident and independent. We value the individual child and work alongside parents and others to meet their needs and help every child to reach their full potential.

We believe that 'Every child deserves to be the best they can be' – academically, socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually within a safe healthy, inspirational and enjoyable environment. Through our core values of Respect, Aspiration, Inclusion and Excellence we want every child to reach their God given potential. Children develop quickly in their early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life changes.

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy: Admissions Policy, Teaching and Learning policy and Behaviour Policy.

2. Admission to School

The children will start school either a morning or an afternoon session for a week at the start of the academic year. This gives the school staff the opportunity to work on a one to one basis and in small groups so we can get to know every child individually.

The EYFS is based upon four principles which should shape practice in early year's settings. These are:

- A unique child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, independent, curious and confident. We recognise that children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement, as well as celebration/sharing circle times and rewards (in line with our behavioural policy) to encourage children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

3 Teaching and Learning

The schools teaching and learning policy defines the features of effective teaching and learning in our school.

The more general features of good practice in our school that relate to the Foundation stage are:

- The partnership between teacher and parents/carers, so that our children feel secure at school and develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- The understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this affects their teaching;
- The range of approaches used that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop play and 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 indoor and outdoor space, facilities and equipment;
- The identification of the progress and future learning needs of children through observations, which are regularly shared with parents;
- The good relationships between our school and the settings that our children experience prior to joining our school;
- The clear aims for our work, and the regular monitoring to evaluate and improve what we do with the children;
- The regular identification of training needs of all adults working within the Foundation Stage.

Play in the Foundation Stage

Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children have the opportunity to play both indoors and outdoors. Most children play spontaneously, others need adult support, but it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

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 on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

Children are given the opportunities to play through well planned experiences where the practitioners support the learning, offering challenge through quality open ended questioning.

4. Inclusion in the Foundation Stage

In our school all our children matter. The children are given every opportunity to achieve their best. The school takes account of the children's range of life experiences and interests when planning for their learning (see the schools inclusion policy).

In the Foundation Stage realistic and challenging expectations are set that meet the needs of all children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the foundation stage. Some children progress beyond this point.

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 alongside continuous provision opportunities, to motivate and support children and to help them to 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 the progress of all children and taking action to provide support as necessary. This involves speech therapy for some of our children.

It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. Children should be allowed to take risks, but need to be taught how to recognise and avoid hazards.

5. The Foundation Stage Curriculum

The Foundation stage curriculum is based on 3 prime areas of Learning:

- Communication and language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development

We also support activities through four specific areas which strengthen the prime areas.

These are:

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

Planning

The EYFS framework provides a long-term plan to follow by ensuring that all Early Learning Goals are covered throughout the academic year.

Medium term planning is created and takes into account the individual children's learning and development needs. All areas of learning and development are planned for and available to access within the setting. The learning opportunities provided include a range of adult focused and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors.

These Areas of Learning and Development address children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development. No one aspect of development stands in isolation from the others as all areas of learning and development are all closely interlinked. This ensures the delivery of a holistic, child-centred curriculum which allows children to make lots of links between what they are learning. All areas of learning and development are given equal weighting and value.

Development Matters and the Early Learning Goals provide the basis for planning throughout the Foundation Stage. Medium term planning is completed termly and identifies the intended learning objectives to be taught.

The staff plan a 'WOW start' to engage the children in a topic and end with a 'Fabulous finish'. Topics are based around the interests noted from the children's play.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The EYFS also includes the characteristics of effective teaching and learning and reception teachers plan activities with these in mind. The characteristics highlight the importance of a child's attitude to learning and their ability to play, explore and think critically about the world around them. The three characteristics 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
- Creating and Thinking critically – Children have and develop their own ideas; make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

6. Assessment

Information is received through tracking documents on the children's learning within Development Matters from preschool and nursery. The teaching staff meet with a range of settings to discuss each child before they start school and visit the settings where possible to familiarise themselves with the children.

Regular assessments of children's learning are made, and this information is used to ensure future planning reflects identified needs. Assessment in the Foundation stage takes the form of observation (written or photo evidence using a bespoke software programme currently Interactive Learning Diary ILD), and this involves the teacher, teaching assistants, the child themselves and parents/carers. Photos and videos of children's learning for assessment purposes will only be taken on school devices, not personal mobile phones or other personal devices, in line with schools safeguarding policies, specifically online safety policy.

During the children's early weeks in the reception class, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a personalised baseline assessment. This information is used to plan for individual children and groups of children.

An assessment programme Insight, is used to record progress in each assessment period and monitor all children. Early intervention/actions can be put in place if needed, to help the children achieve their potential and ultimately the Early Learning Goal's.

Assessment of the children's learning allows their next steps to be planned, both on an on-going basis to help inform the planning and groupings of the children but also to set longer term goals. Parents receive individualised targets for their children that allows them the opportunity to support learning at home.

Parents receive an annual written report that informs them of their child's progress and attainment in each area of learning and contains statements about their characteristics of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress. These are sent to parents in July.

At the end of Foundation stage, the teacher completes the profile scores for each Early Learning Goal (ELG). The scores are sent to the local authority. Teachers use analysis of these scores to inform future planning. Each child's data is discussed with their Year 1 teacher so that a smooth transition occurs.

7. Parents as Partners

We recognise that parents are children's first and most enduring educators and we value the contribution they make.

We recognise the role that parents have played, and their future role, in educating the children. We do this by:

- Holding open mornings and afternoons for all parents planning to apply to our school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school.

- Giving the children opportunity to spend time in their new setting before starting school during the summer term with their current key workers.
- By staff liaising with the local nurseries to talk to nursery staff and children in the summer term.
- The Foundation Stage Staff invite the children and parents to look around their new classroom and to chat with the EYFS staff once allocated to a class.
- Sharing information with parents about their child before starting our school (ie. By chatting/filling in our parent questionnaire).
- Offering parents regular opportunities to talk about their child's progress in our reception class.
- Providing all parents with 24 hour access to their child's online learning journey (ILD)
- There is a formal meeting for parents twice a year where the parents can discuss the child's progress in private with the teacher. Parents receive a report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of each school year.
- Offering an 'open door' policy where parents/carers can discuss their views, concerns or ideas with members of staff.
- Providing a range of activities throughout the year that encourage collaboration between child, school and parents such as sports day, class outings, and inviting parents into class for weekly reading session.
- Providing information about the children's learning throughout the year by sending home regular topic webs or knowledge organisers and by providing this information on our website.
- Providing information about the curriculum through events such as our Autumn term curriculum evening.
- Providing the parents with home-school books to encourage communication about the children.
- Encouraging parents/carers to support their child's home learning through directed activities including reading, phonics practise etc.

All staff involved within the EYFS aim to develop good relationships with all children, interacting positively with them and taking time to listen to them. At our school the EYFS teachers act as 'Key Person' to all of the children in their class, supported by the Teaching Assistants.

8. The Learning Environment

The EYFS areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and be quiet. The classroom is set up in learning areas, where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently.

All EYFS classes have access to an outdoor and indoor activity area under adult supervision. We also make use of the whole school grounds throughout the year. This has a positive effect on the children's development. Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors. It offers the children the opportunity to explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. We plan activities and resources for the children to access outdoors that help the children to develop in all of the 7 areas of learning. Children are encouraged to complete 'Must do challenges' and adult led activities as well as making their own selection of activities on offer, as this encourages independent learning.

9. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS staff to follow the principles stated in the policy. There is a named Governor responsible for the EYFS. The EYFS leader will raise and discuss any issues that require attention with the Senior Management team, and implement changes as necessary, amending this policy as required.