



C of E Primary School

EARLY YEARS POLICY **February 2011**

“I see and I forget, I hear and I remember, I do and I understand”
Confucius

“Research shows that high quality experiences in the early years, including a good home learning environment, have significant positive impact on children’s’ social, emotional and cognitive development and, therefore, their progress at school and into adult life. It is vitally important that early years provision is of a consistently high standard, and that providers continually look for ways to improve the quality of the learning development and care they offer.”

Practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation stage DCSF May 2008



Our youngest children have certain characteristics and needs which are unique to their age group and to their situation as early learners.

The most important feature of young children at this stage of their development is their individuality.

Young children can be;

Quiet, noisy, active, relaxed, aggressive, generous, solitary, cooperative, restrained, assertive, creative, destructive, silent, talkative, vulnerable, trusting, energetic, questioning, observers, participants, reckless, innocent, small, busy, irritating, lively, caring, wilful, clever, generous, inventive, uninhibited, inquisitive, boisterous, impatient, demanding, timid, messy, funny, frightened, unaware of consequences, happy to be inside, anxious about being outside, quarrelsome, vocal, curious, shy and independent.

‘Play underpins all development of young children. It is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally’. (Practice Guidance for the Early Years DCSF 2008). At Surrey Hills School we celebrate ‘playful learning’ in a well planned and enriched environment where each child is valued as an individual with a right to high quality early education.

All children should be given the opportunity to experience the very best possible start to their education. Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives; it is not just a preparation for the next stage but vitally important in itself.

Aims

1. To provide a high quality early education through play which will make a positive contribution to children's early development and learning.
2. To provide a curriculum which embraces the Early Learning Goals as specified in the areas of learning laid out in the Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage, (DCSF 2008) and which is consistent with the National Curriculum.
3. To provide each child with a positive learning environment and an education that lays down a happy, safe and secure foundation for future learning.
4. To provide opportunities which build on the children's previous learning, and includes good quality 'first-hand' experience.
5. To value and respect children in order to develop their self-esteem and a positive attitude to future relationships and learning.
6. To provide opportunities for children to make choices and take risks in order to promote independent learning.
7. To enable children to develop personal and social skills, and independence.
8. To develop an effective partnership with parents to create an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect within which each individual child is supported.

Objectives

We will facilitate these aims by:

1. Careful management of the transition from home to school:
 - Providing information to parents through the school brochure, meetings, and an induction pack
 - Providing opportunities for parents and children to have pre-school visits
 - The Reception Class Teacher visiting local feeder playgroups and nurseries once a term during the preceding year of entry into school and building strong links between the pre school settings and school
 - Admitting children either part-time or full time depending on age of children and parents' preference
2. Providing a well planned and well organised learning environment which provides rich and stimulating experiences:
 - Planning should include provision for a learning environment both indoors and outdoors
 - Use of materials, equipment and displays that reflect the community the children come from and the wider world

- Encourage children to make choices and develop independence by having equipment and materials readily available and well organised
 - Provide resources that inspire children and encourage them to initiate their own learning
 - Give the children the space they need for their activities
 - Plan an environment free from stereotypical images and discriminatory practice
 - Include the local community and environment as a source of learning
3. Providing experiences that build on what children already know:
- Plan experiences, mostly based on real life situations, that are the natural 'next steps' in their learning
 - Allow time for sustained concentration
 - Understand that every aspect of learning for young children is interrelated and interdependent and reflect this in planning
 - In partnership with parents through school link books; where parents can record significant achievements at home which are celebrated at school and used to inform next step planning.
4. Providing an effective, carefully structured early years curriculum:
- Plan experiences that are relevant, imaginative, motivating, enjoyable and challenging
 - Make effective use of unexpected and unforeseen opportunities for children's learning that arise from everyday events and routines
 - Make good use of outdoor space so that children are enabled to learn by working on a larger, more active scale than is possible indoors
5. Meeting the diverse needs of the children to develop their self esteem and confidence in their ability to learn
- Help children to see the purpose of activities and what they need to do to be successful.
 - Accommodate the different ways children learn by planning for the same objective in a range of different ways
 - Help consolidate their learning by revisiting the same learning objective many times
 - Establish an ethos in which individual achievements are valued
 - Plan a mixture of both adult and child initiated activities with uninterrupted time for children to work in depth

Learning and Teaching

Various strategies are employed in learning and teaching that can be adapted to suit the needs of the children. Young children's learning is developed by offering experiences in which they can consolidate their knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Teaching should enable children to make connections in their learning and be actively led forward as well as helped to reflect on what they have already learnt.

Well-planned play, both indoors and outdoors, is a key way in which young children learn with enjoyment and challenge. The indoor and outdoor environment should provide a positive context for both learning and teaching.

Guidance is given on effective learning and teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage (DCFS 2008) and this will be used for planning and delivering an appropriate curriculum in the 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

In planning for individual children's needs, the Guidance identifies 'stages' of learning that demonstrate the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that children need to learn during the Foundation Stage in order to achieve the early learning goals. The early learning goals establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage, i.e. Reception Year.

The early learning goals for the areas Communication, Language and Literacy and for Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy development are in line with the objectives of the government's Primary framework for literacy and mathematics (2006) and the phonic programme 'Letters and sounds' (2007).

Organisation

The Reception Classes have a teacher and classroom assistant and parent helpers as appropriate.

All staff are encouraged to take part in training and planning as far as possible.

Assessment and Statutory Requirements

Throughout the Foundation Stage, as part of the learning and teaching process, each child's development will be assessed. The assessments are made on the basis of accumulating observations and knowledge of each individual child throughout the Reception Year. The child's achievements against the Foundation Stage Profile assessment scales will be finalised during the Summer term using Eyeprofile and will form the basis for the statutory reports to parents, the LEA and for information to be passed on to the Year 1 teacher. Staff attend termly moderation meetings to validate judgements.

On entry into Year R, a simple assessment of each child's basic literacy and numeracy skills will be undertaken to assist target setting and monitoring of pupil's performance throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 in these key areas.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children entering school will be expected, by the end of their first year, to have made good progress towards (and where appropriate beyond) the early learning goals as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

During the Foundation Stage, assessment of children's achievements is mainly 'formative' or ongoing. Assessment opportunities should be identified in planning

and/or arise spontaneously and be recorded in an agreed manner by the teacher and support staff.

Children's early progress will be reported to parents in the first half of the children's first term in school. There will also be an opportunity for parents to discuss children's further progress with the class teacher in the spring term. In the summer term, parents will receive a written report on children's achievements based on the early learning goals across the six areas of learning as measured against the assessment scales set out in the Foundation Stage Profile.

Equal Opportunities

All children are valued for themselves and taught as equals, regardless of race, gender, ability, or disability. Planning an environment free from stereotypical images, finding out about the children's faith and cultural heritage and home experiences, using materials, equipment and displays that reflect the community the children come from and the wider world will give all children access to equal learning opportunities.

Health and Safety

Staff will model and teach safe practice and provide a safe and supportive learning environment both indoors and outdoors allowing children increasing responsibility under supervision, for carrying out practices they have been taught. Access to an orderly, well labelled storage system of resources will provide opportunities for safe, self-initiated activities and begin to allow children to take responsibility for their own environment, and care and safe use of materials and equipment.

Monitor and Review

Governors will work alongside the co-ordinator to ensure the policy is being followed to successfully deliver the planned outcomes. This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of our ongoing Curriculum Monitoring programme, unless National initiatives deem it necessary to review it earlier.