

Co-op Academy Brownhill



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Brownhill

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Date of policy: September 2020

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EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Introduction

At Coop Academy Brownhill and throughout this policy the term Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is used to describe children within Nursery and Reception classes. In partnership with parents and carers we enable the children to begin the process of becoming active learners for life.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil their potential. A child’s experience in the early years has a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right and it provides the foundation for children to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, Department for Children, Schools and Families 2012.

The EYFS is based on four main principles:-

- A unique child – developing resilient, capable, confident and self-assured individuals
- Positive relationships – supporting the children in becoming strong and independent.
- Enabling environments – where opportunities and experiences respond to the individual needs of the child by developing a strong partnership between practitioners, parents/carers and the child.
- Learning and developing – An acknowledgement that children learn in different ways and at different rates.

In line with this our setting aims:

- To ensure all children feel included, secure and valued.
- To provide the relevant curriculum with tasks which are both practical and purposeful and which challenge the children and encourage them to become independent, motivated learners.
- To provide opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also activities which are self-initiated.
- To provide the children with rules and routines which are embedded quickly and give them the best possible start to their school journey.
- To provide a learning environment which develops the children’s imagination and encourages children to explore and express their ideas and feelings.
- To encourage parents and carers to become involved in the children’s learning.

Enabling environments and Safety

We aim to provide a carefully planned and structured learning environment which gives the children the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge across a wide range of areas. Each day the children have access to both indoor and outdoor classrooms which give them the opportunity to access 'challenges' which have been set up in the provision areas. The planning is based on the children's prior learning and experiences which is effectively tracked through the use of an online profile system called 'Tapestry'. Play based learning is very important and allows the children the opportunity to self-help by directing their own learning however, staff are always on hand to enhance and question the children to ensure individual needs are met and challenged.

Alongside creating a fun and well planned learning environment it is also important that all children in the school are and feel 'safe'. 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.

Curriculum

There are seven areas of learning and development set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012. There are three areas which are classed as 'prime' and 4 areas which are classed as 'specific'.

Prime areas

- Communication and language- this includes listening and attention, understanding and speaking.
- Physical development- this includes moving and handling and health and self-care.
- Personal, social and emotional development - this includes making relationships, self-confidence and self-awareness and managing feelings and behaviour.

Specific areas

- Literacy – this includes reading and writing.
- Mathematics – this includes number and shape, space and measure.
- Understanding the world – this includes people and communities, understanding the world and technology.
- Expressive arts and design – this includes exploring media and materials and being imaginative.

When planning and guiding children's activities, we reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in our practice. We place emphasis on the consideration of 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.

In the EYFS we recognise that play is vital to the children's learning and opportunities are given for them to explore their own interests and build on their own play. They have 'free choice' over which areas they access and what play they undertake. However, alongside this children have whole class and small group times which increase as they progress through the EYFS with times for a daily phonics session. The children also take part in the teaching of mathematics and literacy including shared reading and writing.

We plan a balance between children having time and space to engage in their own child-initiated activities and those that are planned by the adults. During children's play, early years practitioners interact to stretch and challenge children further.

Individual profiles and 'Tapestry'

Throughout each school day the adults in class make observations on the play and learning that the children engage with. These observations are made directly onto an online profiling system called 'Tapestry'. Parents have direct access to their own child's profile online and are alerted each time a new observation is made.

An ongoing assessment of the children's learning ensures that future planning reflects the needs and interests of the pupils. Assessment is mainly through observation and discussion carried out by the teacher and other adults as appropriate. Formal assessments are made at the end of each term. At the end of reception the Foundation Stage Profile is completed for each child and assesses the children's attainments against the Early Years Goals as well as a commentary of the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'.

Parent as Partners

We strive to create and maintain partnerships with children, their parents and carers as we recognise that together, we can have a significant impact on a child's learning. We do this through:

- Offering induction meetings during the term prior to their child starting Reception and having a staggered entry approach so parents and the children have the time to settle and create bonds with their new teacher and staff.
- Stay and play sessions each half term which allow parents to come in and spend time seeing how their children play and learn and inviting parents to attend the EYFS sports day in the summer term.
- Giving parents the time to speak to teachers at the start of school each day and encouraging parents to talk to the class teacher if they have any queries or concerns.
- Inviting all parents to a formal meeting (parents evening) three times a year at which the teacher and parent discuss the child's progress.
- Giving parents the opportunity to view and comment on their child's online 'Tapestry' profile.
- Providing parents with an end of year school report on their child's progress and attainment.

Transition

We want our children to experience a smooth educational and emotional transition from Nursery to Reception so to ensure that children make the best start to their school life. The children and parents are actively involved in the process of transition and preparations for transition are seen below:-

- The Reception teachers spend time in Nursery in the summer term, observing the children in their familiar environment and observing practice.
- Time is planned in for meetings between the Nursery and Reception teachers to discuss on going assessment and profile information.
- Parents are invited to a meeting led by the Head of School which aims to give parents information on class teachers, uniform, day to day activities, start and finishing times etc. Also at the meeting the parents and the children are invited to taste some food prepared which gives them a feel of what to expect from school lunches.
- Parents of Nursery children are invited to a welcome meeting (1:1 meeting) before their child starts in Reception with their new teacher. They are given a 'Welcome pack' during the meeting, containing key information about our school. They will also be directed to the school website which will have information they may need.
- Nursery children will take part in a 'meet the teacher' morning where they get to spend time in their new classroom with their new teacher.
- Reception class stagger the intake of children during the Autumn Term in order to make the settling in period as stress free as possible for the children. Children new to Brownhill, the youngest or those with SEND will be asked to start first.

Reception and Year 1 also work together to make the transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 as smooth as possible.

- Reception practitioners plan for more structured activities to be undertaken during the summer terms, encouraging less dependence on adult support.
- EYFS Profiles are passed on to Year 1 teacher and an EYFS Profile/Characteristics of Effective Learning is passed on to the Year 1 teacher.
- Reception and Year 1 teacher meet to discuss individual needs of children in July
- Reception children visit their new Year 1 class and teacher for a 'meet the teacher' session in July.
- The 'Letters and Sounds' approach to phonics and spelling is continued throughout Year 1 and 2.
- There is a similar structure to the school day during the Autumn Term when the children move into Year 1.
- There is an overlap in approach and routines, e.g. behaviour systems, timetables, etc.
- Where possible, the Year 1 children continue to enjoy practical learning experiences through provision which gradually become more formalised towards the end of the academic year.

