

Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Early Years Foundation Stage begins at birth and continues until the child reaches the end of the reception year. It is based upon four principles:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

At Berrycoombe School, we recognise the important role the foundation stage plays in developing the whole child prior to starting life in Key Stage 1. We believe that children should be provided with the best possible start to their education and place great value upon quality provision in the foundation stage.

Aims

- To foster positive attitudes to learning and develop confidence, curiosity and independence through a rich and safe environment.
- To ensure that an inclusive ethos is adopted where **all** children are given equal opportunities.
- To identify children with special educational needs as early as possible and appropriate arrangements made.
- To provide a curriculum that is challenging, stimulating and flexible and ensures progression.
- To develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in the seven areas of learning through hands-on experiences both indoors and outdoors.
- To encourage children to become independent learners through making resources accessible to them and providing them with choices.
- To establish and maintain a close partnership with parents, carers and pre-schools that feed into Berrycoombe School.
- To use observations to monitor children's progress, feed into the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and inform planning.

Admission

Berrycoombe School follows the Cornwall primary school admission arrangements as set out on the Cornwall website 'Starting Infant School 2019'.

We offer a single intake in September and each child is offered a full time placement.

For further information about starting Reception Class please see our 'Welcome to Reception Class' booklet.

Staffing

Both Reception Class and Reception/Year 1 are managed by a qualified teacher who has the support of at least two auxiliary assistants per session. We also welcome parental help in the classroom and on trips and visits.

Environment

The Foundation Stage classrooms aim to be inviting and attractive environments that foster autonomous learning and sustained play for all that use it. This is achieved through the use of well developed 'zones', which are suitably resourced and accessible to all children. We also provide areas for children to enjoy calm and quiet moments where they can relax and converse with friends. There are a variety of floor coverings suitable for a range of activities and children will be able to work at different levels. Space will be available for large scale construction and play.

Berrycoombe has a two levelled outdoor area which is used as an extension of the classroom (freeflow). It provides opportunities for exploration and consolidation of skills in the outdoor environment. The school also has its own large field, Adventure Playground and playground.

Starting Reception Class

The Reception Class at Berrycoombe and the onsite nursery, which provides the majority of each yearly intake, are situated on the same site. This enables the staff of both establishments to develop good relationships where they can communicate regularly in the summer term about the children moving up.

Home Visits are offered to all children and take place in either the summer term (Reception/Year 1 class) or at the start of the Autumn Term (Reception Class). Home Visits are highly valuable in building relationships with parents and carers and in supporting children with the transition into Reception Class.

In the summer term parents and carers are invited to a 'Welcome Evening' attended by the head teacher and Foundation Stage team. This evening provides all that attend with information about routines, teaching, learning and assessment and staff are available to answer questions. The class teacher also visits each child in their pre-school setting wherever possible.

At the end of the summer term, each child due to start Reception Class is invited to spend sessions in their new classroom where they receive the opportunity to explore resources and get to know the staff. These sessions are known as 'Stay and Play' sessions.

Resources

Resources are reviewed regularly to ensure they are:

- safe
- meet the needs of pupils
- varied
- help develop all areas of learning

Resources include

- a range of books provided in an attractive and comfortable area
- sand and water with a variety of equipment
- mathematical and scientific equipment
- resources for imaginative play
- a role play area
- writing and drawing media
- a variety of creative media such as, clay, paint, material etc
- small and large construction toys
- collections of interesting objects to handle and encourage questioning
- programmable robots
- games and puzzles
- objects to develop fine and gross motor skills
- Interactive Whiteboard and class computer

Curriculum

We use the DfE 'Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage' and the 'Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage' documents to ensure good standards for learning, development and care in Reception Class.

Reception Class has a long term plan which is in the form of an action plan considering areas for development within the sixteen Themes and Commitments. Shorter term planning responds more immediately to the interests generated by the children, known as 'In the Moment' planning. We also take part in whole school 'Themed Weeks'.

Planning always incorporates the seven areas of learning which are grouped into **3 Prime Areas**:

- personal, social and emotional development
- communication and language
- physical development

which will help to develop the skills in the **4 Specific Areas**

- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding of the world
- expressive arts and design

The promotion of the Fundamental British Values (democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs), as set out by the Department for Education, are addressed within these areas.

Our planning can be found on the school website; displayed in the window of the classroom and on a display board in the classroom as well as paper copies being distributed to parents/carers.

Teaching and Learning

We believe that our children learn best by being actively involved in activities. We therefore provide a wide range of activities that are interesting, enjoyable and challenging. Through these activities we encourage children to explore, experiment, question, investigate, discover, create, practice and consolidate their knowledge, understanding and skills.

If a child is excited and motivated by learning, especially upon entering school, we believe we are helping them to become enthusiastic life long learners.

We provide time for children to make choices and explore ideas, which means, that our timetable needs to be flexible. We recognise that children learn in different ways and at different rates and aim to provide learning opportunities which are a balance of visual, audio and kinaesthetic.

Play

We believe that 'well planned play is a key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge during the Foundation Stage'. (QCA guidance). We therefore ensure that children have plenty of opportunities to play in a secure environment with appropriate support from staff. We use both the classroom and outdoors to enable children to access both structured play activities and self initiated play activities.

Assessment

Throughout the year we gather evidence of children's progress through observations and assessments which are placed in a Learning Journal. These are seen as important documents that track the progress of each child throughout the course of the year. It is also important that parents are able to contribute to this system and therefore develop relationships that nurture ongoing dialogue between home and school as well as recorded evidence.

At the end of each term, pupil's progress is tracked using the Phases of Development. This involves reviewing the seventeen areas and judging whether a child is 'entering', 'developing' or 'secure' in their phase.

At the end of the year children are judged using the Early Learning Goals and graded as 'entering', 'expected' or 'exceeding' each statement.

As the majority of learning takes place through play and hands on activities, assessments are made using continuous observations, questioning and discussion with pupils and parents and carers. In this way we are able to make informed judgements about a child's progress in relation to the Early Learning Goals.

During the school year we hold parent's consultations with an appointment system which provides us with the opportunity to introduce and review each child's profile and share progress and targets.

At the end of the school year parents and carers are provided with a report containing the teacher's final assessments against the Early Learning Goals; a commentary for characteristics of effective learning; a comment from the head teacher and next steps.

During the summer term, each child's achievements within the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile are summarised and the data submitted to the LEA as part of statutory assessment.