



South Benfleet Primary School (Academy Trust)

A Policy Statement for Teaching and Learning in Early Years Foundation Stage



POLICY Teaching and Learning in Early Years Foundation Stage

This policy outlines the procedures and practices for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Introduction

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfill 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)

At South Benfleet Primary School we greatly value the importance that the Early Years Foundation Stage plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. In our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) classes we aim to provide a broad, balanced, differentiated curriculum which focuses on developing individual needs and the children’s social, emotional, physical, intellectual, moral and cultural development within a safe, secure, stimulating environment.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based upon four key principles:

1. **A unique child** – It is vital to value and appreciate that every child matters. At South Benfleet Primary School we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. We recognize and appreciate that children develop in individual ways and 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 and rewards to encourage and develop a positive attitude to learning. We value and respect all children and understand how to assess and plan for next steps for individual needs.
2. **Positive relationships** - We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships and aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families. We are supportive of the child’s own efforts and independence and we are sensitive to children’s feelings and interests in their child initiated learning through play.

3. Enabling environments -We understand and appreciate that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.
4. Learning and development – The Early Years Foundation Stage classes are organised to allow children to explore and learn through play in a safe and secure environment. The children have the opportunities to participate in active learning as well as be able to learn in quiet and comforting areas within the classrooms. The classrooms are set up in learning areas where children are able to find and locate equipment and resources independently. We ensure that every child's needs are met in a challenging and playful environment across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.

At South Benfleet Primary School our creative curriculum enables children to learn and develop skills, attitudes and understanding in the seven areas of learning. The three prime areas are: Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), Communication and Language (CL) and Physical Development (PD). The four specific areas are: Mathematics, Literacy, Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design.

Aims

At South Benfleet Primary School we are a dedicated team in the Early Years Foundation Stage who aims to provide a happy, caring, community of learners where all their ideas and opinions are welcomed and valued to ensure learning is fun, real, relevant and memorable.

In our Early Years Foundation Stage we aim:

- To develop a sense of wonder and a love of learning.
- To provide an exciting, creative curriculum relevant for all children.
- To be able to learn through play and experience a wide range of learning activities.
- To motivate and encourage our children to be proud of their own achievements and develop their self-esteem and self-confidence in their abilities.
- To give their learning a real purpose with real-life learning opportunities so they are able to solve problems and become independent learners. This will involve exploring the local area and using the available shops to develop learning skills.
- To develop personal, spiritual and moral values with respect and empathy for all religions and cultures.
- To be inspired through creative scenarios and storytelling as well as have exciting visitors to bring our learning to life.
- To learn the key skills of communication, cooperation and team work.
- To become confident speakers who are able to express their ideas, thoughts and opinions about learning and life.
- To ensure that every child achieves their full potential, through hard work, dedication and high expectations.
- To encourage and develop writing opportunities in all areas of the curriculum so that all children can benefit and learn through their own play.
- To feel safe and secure in their setting and to understand the need for rules and safety procedures.
- To promote outstanding behaviour, good manners and show respect for others.

- To work closely with parents and build a strong partnership between practitioners, teachers, children and families.
- To encourage, develop and promote healthy lifestyle choices.
- To enable children to understand the world in which they live and to prepare them for changes and how to deal with these in a positive manner.
- To create a happy, caring school with equal opportunities for all.

Curriculum and planning

Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage we plan activities to give children learning experiences and opportunities to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. We create a yearly overview as well as medium term plans to support and outline key skills and learning outcomes. We believe that good planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Our yearly planning involves a list of themes which includes important key events involving religious festivals. We outline key areas of the curriculum to focus on each half term to support individual needs and ensure progression across all areas of the curriculum.

Our medium term planning is more detailed as it contains the learning outcomes for each area of the curriculum. We use the 'Developmental Matters EYFS framework 2012 document' and the 'Early Years Outcomes document' to plan effective lessons that builds on and extends individual skills and knowledge. To ensure that every child makes good progress we monitor and assess when a child has achieved the learning outcomes from developmental matters so we can move them onto the Early Learning Goals. We plan lessons using the ELG's as well as the exemplification materials of national standards which outlines the learning skills needed to be either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'.

We use the medium term plans as a guide for our weekly planning. Our weekly planning shows how the principles of the EYFS are put into practise and our plans are always informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interest, development and learning needs. The Early Year's staff works as a team to make regular assessments of children's learning and we use this information to support our weekly plans.

Teaching and Learning

At South Benfleet Primary School we strongly believe that children in the Early Years learn more effectively through simulating play activities which reflects their personal interests and needs. As a team we conduct ongoing assessments through observations during child-initiated learning as well as adult-led learning which involves focus work.

Our Early Years setting has a range of areas and activities that supports the seven areas of learning. The classroom and the outdoor learning environment are organized into areas for children to explore and learn in a safe environment. The children have daily access to the indoor and outdoor environment and we ensure that planned activities which link to our topic are available for children to use as well as encouraging and supporting children's spontaneous play.

There are many teaching styles used in Early Years as it is important that the teachers gain an in-depth understanding of how individual children learn best. We provide open ended activities which allow children to direct their own learning whilst adults extend and develop children's ideas and language skills.

At South Benfleet Primary School we support children in using the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning. This involves adults providing play opportunities for children to explore, investigate and experience things and begin to understand how to solve problems. We positively encourage all children to try their best and to develop the confidence to problem solve and be proud of their own achievements. Adults play a vital role in ensuring that children develop their language and understanding skills so they can make links between ideas and create new experiences.

At South Benfleet Primary School we strive to ensure that children acquire responsibility for their own learning and develop motivation, knowledge and skills to prepare them for life experiences.

Our planning and ongoing assessments support the following areas of learning:

Communication and Language - This provides the foundation for literacy skills. It involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment so they can develop confidence with speaking and listening. We encourage children to share their ideas and experiences through story time, rhymes, imaginative role-play and group discussions.

Physical development - This involves providing opportunities for children to be active and develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children develop and practise their fine and gross motor skills. They experience physical activity and what effect it has on their bodies.

Personal, Social and Emotional development - This area of learning involves forming positive relationships with others and to learn to appreciate and respect others thoughts, ideas and beliefs. It is important that children gain a sense of identity and to develop social skills. We promote team work as well as encouraging children to be independent and make choices for themselves.

Literacy Development – This involves encouraging and developing early literacy skills. We provide many learning opportunities for children to make marks and give meaning to what they have written. We teach children to link sounds and letters by segmenting and blending sounds together which will support children to read and write words and sentences. In our setting we ensure that reading and writing is used in all areas of the curriculum.

Mathematics Development – Children are given the opportunity to learn about number, shape, space, position, pattern and measurement. We encourage basic counting skills by teaching nursery rhymes and through practical activities. The children have access to a variety of resources which caters for all learning styles. We believe that it is important to make learning real and relevant and therefore we provide the children with real-life experiences and problem solving situations.

Understanding the World – This involves being aware of their physical world and community. We provide opportunities for children to explore, observe and find out about their environment, the world around them and their friends and family. We offer many opportunities for children to understand modern technology and to develop their computing skills. The children have access to computers in class as well as an ICT suite in school.

Expressive Arts and Design – This involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-

play, and design and technology. The children are given the opportunity to participate in school events, productions and assemblies throughout the school year.

Inclusion

At South Benfleet Primary School we create a curriculum which includes activities that encourage and teach children to respect their own cultural background and beliefs and those of others. We teach many festivals and religious occasions so that all children develop an understanding of different beliefs and ways of living. We encourage parents to come into the class to share their personal experiences and beliefs with the children.

The Early Years staff reflects on their observations to ensure that the provision is accessible for all children. The continuous provision activities are differentiated so that all children can take responsibility for their own learning and be confident in their own abilities. When teachers are conducting focus work with a small group of children, they ensure that the work is pitched correctly for individual children's needs and abilities. We strongly believe that teachers and parents should have strong communication skills between them so that the child's needs and development is at our best interest.

Children with special educational needs are given extra support to enable them to get the best out of their learning. We work closely with the school special educational needs co-coordinator to ensure help is provided within the school. We have links with various agencies and when necessary their involvement will support certain children and they will offer advice to staff. The Early Years staff at South Benfleet Primary school are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and behaviour.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Assessments are vital in helping parents, carers and teachers to recognise children's individual needs and progress. Our assessments are primarily based on observing children's interests, experiences and interactions during child-initiated learning activities. To provide reliable and accurate assessments of the children we observe learning which children demonstrate when they are choosing to developing their knowledge and skills.

At the beginning of the school year we conduct baseline assessments which involve observations and interactions. These assessments support us to plan effective lessons and interventions. We record our assessments using Target Tracker as well as providing evidence in the children's individual 'learning journals'.

The individual learning journals include a range of evidence from the different areas of learning which focuses mainly on child-led activities. Some of this work may be supported in which an adult will scribe what support was given. The learning journals will include hand written observations on sticky labels as well as evidence of children's work. The children's progress is closely monitored daily and analysed half-termly using evidence from the learning journals, target tracker, observation forms and the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the child.

Target Tracker support us to monitor progress and provides us with knowledge of which areas of learning most children find more difficult to understand. Children are assessed during adult focused activities against the learning objective as well as their individual learning needs. Our assessments from the focused activities inform future planning and intervention activities.

We work in close partnership with parents as it is important that they are aware of their child's progress and what they could do to support their children at home with their learning. Parents are given opportunities to celebrate their child's learning and development by providing us with home learning that the child has spontaneously done. We have an open door policy in which the parents are encouraged to share their thoughts about their child's progress. Every week we give our parents a letter explaining what learning they have done at school that week and we encourage them to contribute to their child's learning journey by adding work or experiences from home.

At the beginning of the year we welcome individual parents to a formal meeting to discuss their child's needs and interests. During this meeting the teachers inform the parents about their child's baseline assessments and we provide feedback to parents on how they can help and support their child's learning at home. We also conduct a formal parent evening to discuss children's progress throughout the year as well as a written report at the end of the year which informs parents about their child's development against the Early Learning Goals and the characteristics of learning.

Moderation

In order to provide consistently accurate assessments it is important to share and moderate children's results as a team. The teachers in Early Years closely moderate their own judgements with other practitioners in their setting. We work closely in a small cluster group which includes teachers and LSAs from other schools in the local area. This provides an opportunity to reassure all Early Years teachers that our judgements are accurate, valid and consistent with national standards. We willingly take part in 'moderation visits' where an external moderator will assess the teacher's assessments and evidence to ensure it provides an accurate assessment of individual children.

Transition

The Induction Process:

During the Summer Term prior to starting school the following September the Early Years Leader conducts visits to pre-schools to gain an insight into the children's abilities, interests and behaviour. The Early Years Leader and pre-school staff have meetings to discuss individual children's needs as well as to read the children's transition notes and look through their books and learning journeys.

The children are invited and encouraged to visit our Early Years classrooms for a morning or afternoon for a play session with their key worker from pre-school. We also invite all pre-schools to any special events at our school which includes the Early Years assembly and Christmas play. This provides an opportunity for the pre-school children to become familiar with the school setting.

The Early Years parents are welcomed to an induction meeting to meet key staff in the school and to gain an insight into school policies and procedures in Early Years. The parents and their child are invited to an afternoon play session in the Early Years classrooms so they can meet new friends as well as get to know key staff within the Early Years setting.

At the beginning of the new academic year, we encourage the parents to walk their child into their classroom and become familiar with their new setting. The children start school gradually by attending some morning or afternoon sessions. We strongly believe that a smooth transition from

pre-school into Reception is vital as it supports the children to feel safe, secure and happy in their new surroundings and become familiar with key staff members.

From Reception Class to Key Stage One:

During the final term in Reception, the teachers adjust their planning to ensure that it involves whole class lessons as well as daily assemblies with Key Stage One. The Reception teachers teach a variety of whole class lessons in a Year One classroom to support the children with transition and become familiar with their new surroundings such as understanding where their pegs will be as well as the infant toilets. The Year One teachers visit the reception children to gain an insight into their interests and abilities. They spend time talking to the reception children and the children share their focus books and learning journals with the Year One teachers. Parents are invited to a meeting with Year 1 teachers to learn about how Year 1 works - the expectations and the learning. As a team we ensure that the reception children are prepared and ready for transition into Year One.

Parent Partnership

“We work in partnership with parents and/or carers, to promote the learning and development of all children in our care and to ensure that they are ready for school. The learning and development requirements are informed by the best available evidence on how children learn and reflect the broad range of skills, knowledge and attitudes children need as foundations of good future progress.” (EY statutory framework, 2014)

At South Benfleet Primary School 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 ensure that we get to know the parents as well as the children before they start school in September. The Early Years Staff members attend special events at local pre-schools such as a picnic or a fun day event.

The parents are invited to an induction meeting during the term before their child starts school and again through a ‘play session’ with their child in their new Early Years classroom. The teachers provide an ‘all about me’ booklet for the parent and child to complete at home during the Summer term before they start school. We use these booklets to support a smooth transition into school and to also inform planning during the Autumn term.

The class teachers provide message books for the parents to write any important messages in for the class teacher to see as well as two members of the Early Years staff greet the parents and children on the gate every morning. We encourage an open door policy and we willingly encourage parents to come and talk to the class teacher either before or after school if they have any concerns or questions.

We have a formal meeting for the Early Years parents twice a year at which the class teacher and parents can discuss the child’s progress and new learning targets for that term. Throughout the year, we provide a range of activities to encourage collaboration between children, school and parents. These activities include class assemblies, school visits, parent workshops and topic celebration days.

During the final term in Reception, the teachers complete the Early Years Profile for each child. The parents receive a written report on their child’s attainment and progress at the end of the school year. This report will also include the Early Learning Goals and a short commentary on the child’s skills and abilities in relation to the three characteristics of effective learning.

Monitoring

The Early Years Foundation Stage is closely monitored by the Early Years Leader as well as the senior management team. It is monitored through assessments using target tracker as a tool for data analysis and progression. At the beginning of the school year the children are assessed using a baseline tool which shows evidence of assessment on entry. The Early Years Leader monitors both of the reception classes by conducting observations and providing feedback to staff about children's progress by conducting book scrutiny's and pupil surveys.

We provide opportunities for all early years' staff to identify and communicate any developmental or academic issues with individual children. It is the responsibility of the Early Years Leader as well as the senior management team to identify any training needed for staff working with the reception children. Every half term the Early Years Leader provides the opportunity for staff to give feedback on how the children are progressing and what we could do better as a team.

The Early Years Leader provides evidence to the senior management team about the predicted good level of development for the end of the school year and an analysis of children who are at risk of not achieving good level of development using target tracker and the teacher's knowledge to identify these individual children. The senior management team monitors the Early Years through planning scrutiny, observations and meetings with the Early Years Leader.

Health and safety

In line with the Early Years statutory framework 2014, at South Benfleet Primary School we commence a whole school medicines policy ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that medicines and the systems for obtaining information about a child's needs for medication are kept up to date. Medicines will not be administered unless they have been prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse or pharmacist. Training is provided for staff where the administration of medicine requires medical or technical knowledge. Please see our 'Medicines policy' for further information.

There is a medical box fitted to a wall in one of the Early Years classrooms which include emergency medication if needed for particular children. This medicine requires staff training on when and how to administrate it as well as an emergency card which can be delivered to the office in need of extra support. There is also a phone fitted in the classroom with a list of numbers to each classroom and office.

At the beginning of the school year all parents are asked to fill out a medical form as well as permission to allow us to take their child out on school events and to take photographs of the children when necessary. The parents fill out a form stating whether their child has any dietary needs and the Early Years Leader creates a dietary table showing children's names and dietary needs which is given to the kitchen manager and it is displayed in the Early Years Classrooms.

To ensure the children learn in a safe and secure environment, every morning the Early Years Staff make sure that the outside environment is safe for the children to learn. This includes wiping down the large physical equipment to prevent any slipping, collecting any rubbish or leaves and checking that the resources for writing and cutting are stored safely. The class teachers check that the resources in the classrooms and the 'creative' area are stored at a suitable height for the children and that all equipment is labelled with pictures. Before the children are given access to scissors, plastic hammers, plastic knives and pins, the Early Years Staff teach the children how to use these

resources correctly and safely. These resources are labelled and there are safety posters around the classrooms to remind the children of the rules when using sharp tools and equipment.

The children have access to the computers in their classrooms and therefore the staff ensures that all the cables are safely tucked away. The classroom areas have been set up in particular places in order to ensure that the children are safe. The 'snack area' is situated away from the computers so that there is no water near any leads or computers. The construction tools are contained in boxes on a shelf near a table where children have to sit when they want to use them.

The Early Years Staff have separate lockers in which they store their belongings and mobile phones whilst the children are in the setting. If there are any parent helpers in, then they also have a locker to hang their coat in and their belongings.

In both classrooms there is an inside and outside area display in which the children have to individually move their name to indicate what area they will be learning in. This is to support the children in understanding how to keep safe and why the staff need to know where individual children will be learning throughout the day.

In our Early Years Unit we have a disabled toilet for any children who may have a one-to-one adult support and if a child has any medical concerns or needs. Please see our school safeguarding policy for further information.

The class teachers conduct risk assessments before any school activities take place and before we embark on school outings. Please see our school Health and Safety Policy for further information.

Policy written by: Miss Catherine Rowan

Date: September 2015