



POLEBROOK PRIMARY SCHOOL EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

Aims

- To give each child a happy, positive and fulfilling start to their school life.
- To establish solid foundations upon which to expand and foster a deep love of learning.
- To offer a structure for learning that has a range of starting points and unlimited opportunity for development.
- To offer each child a wide range of new and exciting experiences.
- To give each child the opportunity to consolidate their own learning, and to explore and test out their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.
- To enable each child, through encouragement and high expectations, to develop their full potential, socially, physically, intellectually and emotionally.
- To encourage children to develop independence within a loving, secure and friendly atmosphere.
- To support children in building relationships through the development of social skills such as cooperation and sharing.
- To help each child to recognise their own strengths and achievements through experiencing success and developing the confidence to work towards personal goals.

The Curriculum

The Reception Class follow the curriculum as outlined in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) document, which is available to download at

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014_with_clarification_note.pdf

These guidelines clearly define what we teach.

The EYFS framework includes seven areas of learning and development, all of which are seen as important and interconnected. Three areas are seen as particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, for building their capacity to learn and form relationships and thrive (DfE 2014: 1.3). These are known as the prime areas, and support children's learning in all other areas.

The prime areas are:

- **Communication and Language** - Listening and Attention, Understanding and Speaking
- **Physical Development** - Moving and Handling, Health and Self-Care
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development** - Making Relationships, Managing Feelings and Behaviour, and Self-Confidence and Self-Awareness

The specific areas of learning develop essential skills and knowledge for children to participate successfully in society.

The specific areas are:

- **Literacy** - Reading and Writing
- **Mathematics** - Numbers and Space, Shape and Measures
- **Understanding the World** - People and Communities, The World and Technology
- **Expressive Arts and Design** - Exploring and Using Media and Materials, and Being Imaginative

Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning run through and underpin the seven areas of learning and describe the learning processes that occur throughout everyday activities and experiences in the early years. The Reception teacher and learning support staff plan activities within the Reception classroom with these in mind. They 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 children are introduced to our learning dinosaurs to help them become fully involved in their learning. The dinosaurs encourage the children to remain effective and motivated learners and provide the language to be able to explain the skills they use whilst learning.

The three characteristics are;

- **Playing and Exploring (Explorasaurus)** - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- **Active Learning (Tryasaurus)** - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- **Creating and Thinking Critically (Thinkasaurus)** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Teaching strategies

We ensure there is a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities across the day. The children spend time doing self-selected tasks which are structured into the learning environment by the early years team. The adult and child interaction is essential, as the adult's response to children builds understanding and therefore guides new learning. In some cases the adult will ask a child to come and complete a task or activity with them; at other times they will participate in a child's activity, extending it where possible. The adult's role is to continually model, demonstrate and question what the child is doing. By the Summer term in Reception the children will experience many more adult-directed tasks as they prepare for their transition to Year 1.

Play

Learning through play is an important part of our Early Years classroom. We believe that children learn best from activities and experiences that interest and inspire them. Using their interests as a starting point, we provide children with stimulating, active play experiences in which they can explore and develop their learning to help them make sense of the world. They have opportunities through their play to think creatively and critically alongside other children as well as on their own. They are able to practise skills, build upon and revisit prior learning and experience at their own level and pace. Play gives our children the opportunity to pursue their own interests and inspire those around them. The children learn to adapt, negotiate, communicate, discuss, investigate and ask questions. We believe it is important that adults take an active role in child-initiated play through observing, modelling, facilitating and extending their play. Getting the balance right between child-initiated play, which is controlled, and adult-led activities is very important to us.

Teaching

We include direct, carefully planned, adult-led experiences for children in the form of structured adult-led teaching and adult-led group activities. These are particularly important in helping children to learn specific skills and knowledge and it is often through children's play that we see how much of this learning children have understood and taken on.

Each day we follow a timetable with set routines in place. We set aside times each day when the children come together to be taught in the more traditional sense, gathered together on the carpet as a class. In these slots we focus on our themed work, maths, literacy, phonics, and stories. These sessions help to develop vital habits of learning: learning as a group, listening to the teacher, taking turns to answer and sitting still. Reading and story-time play an important part of the day. We want to make sure our children have a love of books and will leave the EYFS with a bank of stories they know well, both traditional and modern classics. We make sure there is always time for a whole class story at the end of the day but also that there are many opportunities to enjoy books at other times. Every child has their own picture/reading book to take home and has one-to-one time sharing books with an adult and group reading sessions in class.

Planning

The children are at the heart of our planning and we aim to develop their imagination and fascinations on an on-going basis. Our themed topics fire that imagination but these are flexible to ensure we follow the children's interests at all times. Themes follow the Early Years areas of learning: 'Understanding the World', 'Literacy' and 'Communication and Language'. Staff plan in more detail on a weekly basis using daily notes, observations and interactions with children to inform where the learning journey should move to. The themed topics are available for parents on the school website and blogs follow the children's learning online. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning through their child's profile on the Interactive Learning Diary.

Visits and visitors

The role that visits and visitors play in the curriculum at Polebrook is given great emphasis, including in the Early Years. We aim to build visits/visitors into the year; these can range from a visit to the local woodland/ country park to travelling all the way to London to see The Lion King! Visitors also really enhance a topic and we like to have 'experts' such as builders or nurses coming in to talk to the children. We are interested in parents coming in to share their knowledge or a skill.

Forest School

Forest School is an additional and innovative educational approach to outdoor learning and play. It allows our children to achieve and develop their knowledge and experience of the world whilst building confidence and developing their high self-esteem in an outdoor environment. Two of our staff are trained as Forest School Leaders and our EYFS children are offered regular Forest School experience at a nearby woodland site. Within the forest, the children engage in hands on outdoor activities which allow them to explore and investigate the natural environment under supervision but with the greater freedom that the countryside offers.

Classroom organisation

Our Early Years classroom has defined areas with clearly labelled resources to ensure children can access them easily. The classroom is set up in a way to provide children with experiences and activities in all of the seven areas of learning. The classroom has a writing area, maths area, workshop area, listening area, book corner, role play area, construction/small world area, outdoor area and carpeted teaching area. A variety of activities are planned for and set up in the different areas each day. The adults move to whichever area their focus for the session/day is. The outdoor area is an important part of the classroom with many children choosing to learn outside for much of the day. We try to ensure that the range of activities outside reflects the different curriculum areas, for example setting up quiet spaces for reading, maths games and for construction. The Reception class have physical play activities in our outdoor area and also during break time, P.E. and dance sessions. Each child has their own labelled peg and drawer in the classroom. We encourage children to take responsibility for keeping their clothes, book bag and work safely in one place!

Assessment, observations and profiles

Assessment is an essential part of the learning and development of children in the EYFS. It involves staff observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. This enables staff to shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. To ensure we have evidence of a child's progress in the EYFS we use a range of strategies, all of which come together in their individual interactive learning diary and activity books. The children are very proud of their work and enjoy sharing it with family and friends. The profiles are collections of children's work, photos and observations which create a detailed picture of the child. Where appropriate, we include individual next steps for children's learning. These next steps are discussed by the EYFS team and inform planning for the next day and week ahead. Staff have access to an iPad which is used to capture and note observations and next steps for learning. Parents have regular access to these profiles online and can add their own observations and their child's voice. The profile can be downloaded by parents and also informs the next teacher when the child enters Year 1.

Parents are encouraged to contribute observations through the use of our 'Superstars'. Significant events that happen at home can be recorded onto star-shaped cards. When they are returned to school they are then shared and celebrated in the class and then displayed on our 'Superstar' display in the classroom. Blank stars are available in the classroom and can be taken home to complete or can be completed with the support of a member of staff.

The children have a Baseline assessment at the start of the Autumn term and this, along with information from home and playgroups/nurseries, supports the teacher in meeting the child's needs within the classroom. Throughout the Early Years the Class Teacher tracks the progress and development of the child across the seven areas of learning. At the end of Reception the class teacher assesses each child against the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELG) and comments on whether their development within each ELG is either 'emerging', 'expected' or 'exceeding'. This information is also communicated to parents and carers in the Reception child's end of year report and can be discussed with the teacher after school or at parents' meetings.

Role of staff and key worker

The class teacher is the named key worker for each child in the Reception classroom setting. Their role is to help ensure that every child is supported to meet their individual needs and to help the child become familiar with the setting. The teacher develops a settled relationship with the child and builds a partnership with their parents. All adults within the Early Years setting actively seek to form positive respectful relationships with the children in their care. The formation of healthy relationships between adults and children is essential in supporting children's well-being and their future successes.

Partnership with parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers are a child's first educator and therefore work very closely to ensure they are involved in what we do with their child at school. We want parents to feel they can speak to us about their child at any time and feel comfortable in our setting. As well as visits to the Nurseries and playgroups, the teacher also makes home visits before the children start school to ensure a smooth transition.

When a child gains a place at Polebrook Primary School they are invited to 'Thursday club'. This involves the children coming into the classroom for three afternoons in the summer term before the 'Transfer Day' when the children come into class for the whole morning. By the time school begins in September they already feel an important and valued member of Red Class. In the first term parents are invited to our open week and a parents' meeting so the child's early learning and their settling in can be reviewed. Later in the year further parents' meetings are organised and parents and carers are also invited to "Stay and Play" afternoons. At Stay and Play adults are encouraged to join in and share their child's learning by participating in learning activities and experiences with their child within the classroom .

In addition we operate an open door policy and the class teacher is available most evenings to address any urgent matters or concerns.

Health & safety and safeguarding

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. Our child protection policy upholds the requirements of our Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) but also fulfils the requirements detailed in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance (2014)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/299391/DFE-00337-2014.pdf

Members of staff do use school iPads to take photographs as evidence to support the regular observation assessment cycle in the EYFS. These photographs are used in children's profiles, in class displays and on the school website. All parents are asked to state if they give permission

for their child's image to be used on the school website through the paperwork in their initial starter packs. We are a healthy school and **our children receive free fruit through a Government scheme until the end of KS1 and free milk up until their 5th birthday.** Most children eat a hot school lunch (free from September 2014) but may bring a packed lunch.