



(Reviewed September 2020)

Old Basing Infant School - Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

The Government defined Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old.

The purpose of this document is to describe the aims, principles and strategies of Old Basing Infant School for the teaching and learning of Early Years education in line with the EYFS.

Aims of the Early Years Foundation Stage

At Old Basing Infant School, we feel that a child's first experience of school should establish attitudes and habits which will provide a strong basis for the future. Our aims for the EYFS are as follows:

- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum which fosters intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.
- Uphold the themes and commitments of the EYFS Framework's four guiding 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 by understanding the characteristics of learning i.e. active learning, playing and exploring, creating and thinking critically
- Enable children to learn and develop skills, attitudes and understanding which prepare them for continuing education (in particular, Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum).
- Enable children to make an effective transition from home and pre-school to school.
- Embrace the articles of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**. In particular:
 - **Article 5 (Parental guidance)**: we will respect the rights and responsibilities of families to direct and guide their children so that, as they grow, they learn to use their rights properly.
 - **Article 3 (Best interests of the child)**: The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them.
 - **Article 29 (Goals of education)**: Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest.

The Learning Environment

For our children to learn most effectively, we provide a balance between whole-class teaching sessions, adult-led tasks, carefully planned activities for children to access in the environment and those chosen by the children themselves. We encourage our children to take their own initiative, to engage in problem solving and to make independent choices allowing them to continue their own personal learning journey. At all times, our children are given opportunities to develop long term life skills, such as negotiating with others and to experience learning in an environment (including outside) that allows them to be confident and excited learners. We aim to provide an environment where children:

- Feel secure
- Are interested in what they are doing and are making progress
- Can take their own initiative in their learning
- Foster enthusiasm and excitement so they find their learning enjoyable, rewarding and satisfying
- Are given opportunities for spontaneous interaction and learning from each other
- Can practise, consolidate and extend their previous learning and experiences
- Are involved in practical activities, enquiry and purposeful play
- Are encouraged to think and question to develop their learning further
- Have daily access to the outside learning environment

The Early Years Curriculum

We develop the Foundation Stage Year R curriculum based on the seven areas of learning identified in the EYFS Curriculum Guidance. There are three prime areas and four specific areas:

- The three prime areas are:
 - Personal, Social and Emotional Development
 - Communication and Language
 - Physical Development
- The four specific areas are:
 - Numeracy
 - Literacy
 - Understanding the World
 - Expressive Arts and Design

As well as teaching the children through the seven areas of learning, we also create opportunities for the children to demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning as follows:

- 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.
- Creating and thinking critically - Children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Relationship Education and Health Education and Heartsmart in the EYFS – The Heartsmart materials are used in Year R to introduce themes such as developing resilience, wellbeing and healthy relationships alongside the 'Heartsmart High 5'. The Six Strands of Wellbeing materials and carefully selected stories exploring themes such as families and understanding differences, are used to support planning and teaching of the Personal, Social and Emotional Development part of the Early Years Curriculum.

Long and medium-term planning is agreed within the year group (teaching staff) and short-term planning discussed with the children, all with consistent objectives. Each class manages its own short-term planning, allowing children's individual needs to be considered. The planning takes account of individual progress and future learning needs. We recognise that children's progress will be at different rates and that individual achievements will vary. For example, some children will begin working within the exceeded criteria laid out in the EYFS Curriculum Guidance, when appropriate.

Units of work, where appropriate, are sometimes provided by Subject Managers, although the delivery is usually on an integrated basis. We appreciate that, although one activity may focus on a specific learning objective, the learning itself will touch on several others in different areas.

Assessment

Careful assessment, predominantly through observation and record keeping, enables staff to plan a curriculum "**with the input of the children**", which meets the needs of the individual and ensures continuity and progression.

Records of Development are passed to the school from local pre-school providers in most cases. Using information in these assessments and our own initial observations in the first half of the Autumn Term, the Early Years team will determine which age and stage band from the Development Matters document that each child is working within. The Development Matters non-statutory curriculum guidance is used by teachers to assess whether children are working within the age bands 0-3, 3-4 or Reception. Teaching and assessment builds upon this to enable children to achieve the Early Learning Goals, or beyond, by the end of the year.

The EYFS Profile is the main system of assessment. Record keeping used in Foundation Stage Year R develops over the year into the annual report provided to parents at the end of the year. The outcomes of the EYFS Profile across the cohort are reported to the Local Authority (Hampshire County Council).

The Early Years team also keep records and assessments on guided reading sessions, key word development, phonic skills and any interventions carried out with individual children. Moderation with the Year 1 team is carried out when

the Early Years Team deem a child is ready to progress onto the exceeding descriptors, especially within reading, writing and maths.

Parents are asked to contribute regularly to the EYFS Profile to help build a bigger picture of children's learning and understanding. This is mostly done using Tapestry, an online Learning Journal, through which parental observations can be made alongside regular observations by the Year R team. This programme can also be used to support assessment by matching observations added onto Tapestry with any end of year Early Learning Goal objectives.

Introduction to school

We aim to make the transition from home and pre-school to school as smooth as possible. We value the roles the pre-school providers have in preparing children for school and actively involve them in the transition to school by liaising with our main providers throughout the year and communicating with all pre-school providers in the Summer Term each year to support successful transition. The main pre-school providers are offered the opportunity to bring their children for a look around the school as well.

A series of 'Starting Together' sessions are offered in June/July, prior to children starting school in September. These sessions allow parents to bring their children to school to be involved in a variety of activities. This opportunity enables the children to feel confident and familiar with their new school and begin to form relationships with staff and their peers. Further to these sessions, two activity visits are then offered, so children can spend time in their class with their new teachers and other pupils to further ease the transition.

An introductory meeting for parents, in the form of a parents' information evening, gives them the information they need to ensure their children begin school successfully. Home visits are provided for all children in September to support us in developing strong relationships between home and school.

When these introductions are not possible in the Summer Term before a child starts school (as in 2019 for the 2020 intake due to the impact of COVID19), alternative contact via video links, email and phone conversations to introduce the children virtually to the school environment and their teachers will be provided. An introductory meeting and small group play session will take place in the first week of school starting in September in place of home visits.

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