

Beaufront County First School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

May 2015

Review Date: July 2015

Introduction

“The early years foundation stage (EYFS) sets the statutory standards that all early years providers must meet. This includes all maintained schools, non-maintained schools, independent schools and all providers on the Early Years Register.

The EYFS aims to provide:

- Quality and consistency in all early years settings.
- A secure foundation for all children for good progress through school and life.
- Partnerships between different practitioners.
- Partnerships between parents or carers and practitioners.
- Equality of opportunity for all children.”

(Department for Education, 2012)

At Beaufront County First School we strongly believe that:

“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

Responsibilities

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Early Years Policy of Beaufront County First School.

The Headteacher and Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the physical Early Years Policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to: ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

The Governing Body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Beaufront County First School complaints policy.

The Headteacher and teaching staff will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Early Years Policy of Beaufront County First School.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, will be responsible for following the Early Years Policy.

Principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- **A unique child.** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and independent. We recognise 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 also encourage metacognition to ensure that children see themselves as thinkers and learners.

- **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 recognise that children with good personal, social and emotional skills are more likely to achieve and to succeed in all aspects of life.

- **Enabling environments.** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We ensure that the environment is safe, inclusive and welcoming. Through observations we assess the children's interests, stages of development and learning needs before planning challenging and achievable activities and meaningful experiences to extend their learning.

- **Learning and development.** The Early Years classroom and outdoor learning areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. Planning and assessment are intrinsically linked and developed to ensure that a balance of child-initiated and adult-led learning is taking place. Children are encouraged to strive for their goals, no matter how big or small, through fun, meaningful and relevant learning experiences.

Early childhood is the time during which children develop key skills and build foundations upon which their futures are built. At Beaufront County First School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, it is equally important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS for children is from birth to five years of age. All children begin school with a wide variety of experiences and learning and it is the privilege of the adults working in the foundation stage to accept the task of building upon that prior learning experience. This is achieved through an holistic approach to learning ensuring that parents and guardians, support staff and the Foundation Stage team work effectively together to support the learning and development of all children within the Early Years and beyond.

Welfare

At Beaufront County First School we see safety and security as a high priority and it is important that all of the children in our care are safe and happy. Following the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, our key responsibilities with regard to welfare are:

- * To promote the safety and welfare of the children in our care.
- * To promote good healthy and prevent the spread of infection by taking appropriate action when children are ill
- * To manage the behaviour of the children in our care in a way that is appropriate for their individual needs and stage of development
- * To ensure that adults who have access to children, or who look after children are suitably vetted and trained.
- * To ensure that the setting is fit for purpose and that furniture and equipment is safe.
- * To maintain records, policies and procedures required for safe and efficient management of the setting.

Relationships

At Beaufront County First School we feel that it is very important for children to learn social etiquette and to develop positive relationships with peers and adults. This will be achieved through differentiated planning, whole-school cross-curricular activities and learning days, and through the specific teaching of Early Learning Goal 08 - Making Relationships. This will be mostly child led but will be enabled through playing and interacting with children and adults.

Safeguarding

Safety is paramount and Beaufront County First School has a robust and effective Safeguarding Policy to ensure the children in our care are protected.

Aims

Every child is entitled to grow up safe and healthy, to enjoy life, to achieve, to make a positive contribution and to achieve economic wellbeing. It is the aim of the EYFS to help young children achieve these five outcomes and this once again reinforces the importance of the best possible start in life.

At Beaufront County First School we work tirelessly to develop and provide a broad, differentiated, and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. We see and value each child as an individual and our approaches to teaching enable children to learn at their own rate, whilst ensuring that they are challenged and supported to achieve to the best of their ability.

At Beaufront County First School, we aim to:

- Provide an inclusive, safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and sharing environment
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that ensures that children are able to access both educational and life experiences from the Early Years and beyond. This includes the ability to access the new National Curriculum in place throughout the school
- Start with 'what the child can do' and assess children regularly in order to value and develop each child's skills and attributes with a view to developing the whole child
- Encourage independence and self-value from the earliest age, providing children with a range of experiences enabling them to utilise their knowledge and skills for a range of purposes
- Work closely with parents and guardians and value their contributions ensuring that all children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability, access and enjoy an inclusive and meaningful early education
- Ensure that children enjoy their time at school, starting with a secure and valuable relationship with learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- Provide experiences for all children, whatever their needs, which are inclusive rather than parallel.

Learning and Development

At Beaufront County First School, our curriculum enables the child to learn and develop skills, attributes and understanding in the following areas of learning:

The prime areas are:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Communication and Language
- Physical Development

The specific areas are:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Art and Design

Achievement of these prime and specific areas of learning is through:

- Playing and exploring.
- Active learning.
- Creating and thinking critically.

Throughout the EYFS we plan activities to allow children to work towards the Early Learning Goals and prepare them for the National Curriculum. Where children exceed the ELGs, planning and teaching is differentiated to ensure that children are able to access the National Curriculum objectives as relevant to themselves. Learning opportunities are differentiated and are constantly evaluated to determine their suitability for challenging, extending and supporting children in their learning and development. Children may access learning opportunities independently and with adults in order to ensure that the learning remains meaningful and valuable.

At Beaufront County First School we believe that independent learning through play, balanced with learning through guided play and adult-led activities, allows children to develop skills throughout all Areas of Learning.

In a secure environment with effective adult support, children will be able to,

- Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them to understand the world
- Rehearse and develop concepts, ideas and skills
- Develop a sense of self-control and understand the need for rules
- Be alone, be with others, or cooperate as they talk to express and explore their needs and feelings
- Take risks and make mistakes that they can learn from
- Be creative and imaginative

- Communicate with others to explore, investigate and solve problems
- Express feelings safe in the knowledge that their feelings are valid and will be respected

Adults within the EYFS and those involved with Reception children's education, support learning by:

- Planning meaningful activities and resourcing the environment to stimulate and interest children
- Extending, challenging and supporting learning through planned play
- Extending and supporting child-initiated play
- Develop language and communication skills through a range of activities
- Consider the needs and stages of the children when planning activities or developing play
- Talking with the children during play and planned activities
- Asking questions and giving children the tools to find answers

Observation, Assessment and Planning

Excellent planning is the key to making children's learning effective, exciting, varied and progressive. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning has the principles of the EYFS at heart and ensures that these principles are constantly and consistently put into practice. Topics within Reception are planned to include all aspects of the EYFS to ensure that the children are given the opportunities needed to access the National Curriculum. Moreover, topics are flexible to allow for cohort differences, interests and world/ national/ local events within the year. This ensures that a meaningful curriculum is provided each year.

Medium term topic planning takes place each half term and is linked closely to the long-term plan, which outlines the Early Years outcomes. This ensures that all curriculum areas are covered thoroughly whenever a topic is planned.

Short term planning is always informed by observations made of the children, in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning needs, as well as progress within Circle Times and focused teaching sessions.

The children are given regular opportunities to talk about their achievements and next steps, particularly in the area of Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Planning within the EYFS is based as much around the children's interests as possible and always has high but realistic and differentiated expected outcomes in order to ensure excellent progress.

Assessment in the EYFS takes the form of a range of observations. These observations are currently recorded using post-it notes, photographs, videos and children's own work, and are used to inform all stakeholders (staff, outside agencies, children, parents and guardians, the Senior Leadership Team and governors). Parents and other stakeholders are regularly invited to contribute to 'Learning Journal' files for each child, and along with in-house observations, the Learning Journals inform planning, teaching, further assessment and future improvements. Beginning in September 2015 the aim is for each Reception child to have a 'eProfile' to allow for more regular and cohesive observations that can be linked directly to monitoring progress and that can be shared with parents via a secure email link.

Assessments are ongoing but are more formally recorded and tracked by teachers each half term. This ensures that children have few gaps, and where gaps emerge or where children are exceeding targets, appropriate measures or extensions are put in place quickly to ensure continued excellent progress for each child. Parents and guardians are invited to regular Parent Meetings and are given a report at the end of the year, which include the levels of development achieved by the children following final assessments made in the final term of Reception. Parents and guardians are also regularly informed of the progress of their children and are made aware of where the children need to be in order to reach a 'Good Level of Development'.

Learning Through Play

At Beaufront County First School, in the EYFS children often learn through carefully planned, purposeful play-based activities with clear learning objectives and intended outcomes. Staff will decide when child-initiated or adult-led activities would provide the most effective learning opportunities, and this may depend on a number of factors such as the intended outcomes, the needs and interests of the children and the process of learning that is under development at the time. As the children move through Reception they will access a range of purposeful, varied learning opportunities through well-resourced play, explorative and skills-based learning is at the heart of the EYFS. We endeavor to ensure that all children are able to learn through enjoyable, meaningful activities, which they are given the confidence to believe that they can access successfully.

The Induction Process

At Beaufront County First School we believe that a successful transition process will ease children into their new classes or settings and ensure that they feel safe, secure, welcome and confident. This will increase the chance of the children settling quickly and therefore will ensure that every child is able to access learning opportunities from the first moments of their education.

Children entering Reception at Beaufront County First School are invited to open afternoons in the June before they are due to start school. Staff will also visit the children at their own home during the second half of the summer term and there is a 'Meet the Teacher' evening for new parents in this time. Children begin Reception in September and go through a period of transition in which time they begin with mornings, followed by mornings with lunch and finally whole days. Parents are, after this time welcome to continue to stagger their child's school day as they feel appropriate, particularly in the cases of much younger children (e.g. summer birthdays) and those with additional medical or learning needs.

Home and School Links

We recognise that parents and carers are a child's first and most enduring educators and we aim for the schools and parents and carers to work closely in the Foundation unit. This can have a very positive impact on a child's development but relies on a two-way flow of information and knowledge.

We will develop this working relationship between the school and parents and carers as follows:

- We will outline the school's expectations in a Behaviour and Learning Contract.
- We will hold a parent consultation early in the year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- We will update the website regularly and keep parents informed of the children's topics and learning theme each half term or weekly as needed.
- We will operate an "open door" policy that will allow parents and carers to discuss concerns and developments in an informal manner. Conversely, if staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will immediately approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- We will conduct workshops for parents and carers to enable them to be familiar with the teaching methods used in school to make it easier to emulate them at home.

- We will conduct a further parent consultation late in the term to inform parents and carers formally of a child's results and overall progress.
- There will be opportunities for parents and carers to visit the school on a volunteer basis to assist with the children's learning by assisting with guided reading.
- At the end of term, we will invite parents and guardians to visit the school informally in order to fully appreciate the work that has been produced in that term.

Intimate Care

“Intimate” care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. In most cases, intimate care is to do with personal hygiene and it is good practise for the school to inform the school nurse of all children requiring intimate care.

Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff work in partnership with parents to give the right support to an individual child.

No intimate care is to be given without the express written permission of the parent or guardian of that child and all parents and guardians will be asked to provide that permission when their child Reception.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Children with special educational needs will be supported as appropriate to enable them to access the curriculum fully. This includes children that are more able and those with specific learning difficulties and disabilities. Individual Education Plans identify targets in specific areas of learning for those children who require additional support commensurate with the school's Special Educational Needs Policy. The school's SEN Co-ordinator is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff and parents and for arranging external intervention and support as necessary.

In line with the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, we will provide all children, regardless of ethnicity, culture, religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities, gender or ability with equal access to all aspects of school life to ensure that every child is valued as an individual. All staff are role models and are aware of the influence they have in promoting positive attitudes and use that influence to challenge stereotypical attitudes.