EARLY YEARS POLICY

ST BARNABAS PRIMARY SCHOOL

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*subject to any relevant changes in legislation or other appropriate guidelines

RATIONALE

The Foundation Stage is vital in children's development. The transition from home to school and the formation of good relationships with children and parents is crucial. Our Early Years curriculum needs to promote children's intellectual, physical, emotional and social development. It should facilitate children in becoming active, independent learners.

Early years practitioners have high expectations of the children in their care and a broad view of their role in supporting children. Practitioners recognise that children's well-being and achievement are integral and as such practitioners have a holistic approach to teaching and learning that holds the key statements of the 'Every Child Matters' document (DfES 2004) as fundamental.

The Practice guidance for the Early Years Foundation stage and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are key to planning, provision and safeguarding our children. The four principles of the EYFS are used to reflect on and enhance provision.

OBJECTIVES

As identified in the EYFS (DfES 2007), the principles which guide our work are grouped into four themes. These four guiding themes work together to underpin effective practice in the delivery of the EYFS (DfES 2007).

A Unique Child – every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

Positive Relationships – children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person.

Enabling Environments – the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning.

Learning and Development – children can develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of Learning and Development are equally important and inter-connected.

As stated in 'Every Child Matters' (DfES 2004) to achieve well-being in childhood and later life our key objectives are that our children are:-

- Healthy
- Stay Safe

- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

In order for our children to have attained high standards by the end of the Foundation Stage, we shall:-

- Ensure children settle happily into school life through a well planned but flexible admissions procedure.
- Recognise the importance of pre-school experiences and identify these using
  - Meet parents and carers at admissions.
  - Transfer records received from the pre-schools/sure start.
  - A close working relationship with Sure Start and other settings.
- Enable children to have the play and learning experiences appropriate to their age and maturity.
- Recognise the importance of our children feeling happy at school and develop their confidence, self-esteem and independence.
- Help children to express their emotional feelings and express themselves in constructive ways.
- Provide experiences that ensure that children begin to value diversity of culture, religion, race and language of themselves and others.
- Facilitate children to develop warm and secure relationships with adults and peers.
- Provide opportunities to communicate their needs, feelings, ideas and experiences in verbal and non-verbal ways.
- To provide opportunities for children to develop basic physical skills and concepts that will provide a solid foundation for future learning experiences.
- To provide good quality opportunities to engage in role-play and imaginative play, that encourages creativity of thought and expression.
- Work with parents as partners to ensure that children feel that school and home work in harmony
- Ensure progression, promote increasing independence and aim for children to be at an emotional, social, physical and intellectual level that is appropriate for progression into Key Stage 1.
- Recognise the importance of children being given time to enjoy their childhood.

To achieve our objectives and to give all children the best opportunities for effective development and learning we use the principles and practice guidelines to plan for the seven areas of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The happiness of the young child is most important. Positive learning and self-image can be built from a feeling of security and well-being. They need consistency in relationships with adults and time to come to terms with other children. We aim to establish constructive relationships with parents.

Human and social learning can be fostered through good quality situations which allow the children to examine their feelings and worries and come to terms with others and with their place in the world.

We will ensure equality of opportunity for all.

Children, according to their development needs, can join in activities which encourage taking turns, co-operation and experiences which encourage sharing, caring and developing a respect for others and themselves.

COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

These areas include the skills of communication, listening, understanding and speaking, and reading and writing. The development of language is vital to other areas of learning as it is closely related to understanding and thought. Language helps children to plan, discuss and understand their experiences and learning.

Children need interesting and stimulating experiences and activities to talk about and an interested adult to listen and encourage conversation. The adult needs to ensure the children have opportunities to develop the complexity of their speech, to extend their vocabulary and to become confident as language users. Children need to discuss, express their points of view and feelings, describe what is happening, recall past experiences, anticipate what might happen, reason and use language imaginatively.

The sharing of books and stories is important for young children. Children can appreciate the pleasure they hold as well as providing opportunities to talk, listen and widen their vocabulary.

Children need experiences to see the relationship between speaking, listening and writing. They are familiar with print around them, at home, in the supermarket, road signs advertisements and so on, in the environment.

Children need to understand what writing is and have reason to use it so that they feel they want to write. Writing opportunities are included as a natural part of a play situation.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

We aim to provide daily opportunities for mathematical experiences. Children need to become competent in key skills of counting, sorting, matching, identifying patterns and working with number shapes, spaces and measures. Imaginative play, stories, songs and games help children enjoy early mathematical experiences and will include numbers larger than 20. There will be particular emphasis on the language needed to convey mathematical concepts. Sensitive intervention in children's play can promote learning.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Young children are naturally curious, and this promotes their learning of the world in which they live. By providing quality experiences, we are laying the foundation for future learning in Science, History, Geography, Design and Technology, Information and Communications Technology and RE. Scientific study depends upon careful observation, investigation, exploration and experimentation, accurate communication and reading.

Children will be encouraged to think about the past within their living memory and beyond. They will be provided with the language skills to discuss time and the past. As well as becoming familiar with their immediate home environment and that of the school, children will be encouraged to form opinions and talk about those features they like and dislike. We shall tell children about their culture and beliefs as well as those of other people.

Through play, children will be provided with opportunities to make, build on and improve designs. They will be encouraged to ask questions and find out how things work. The importance of Information technology and early use of our computers is recognised. The children will have regular use of the computers and programmable toys.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is important that there are opportunities for strenuous activities balanced with quiet restful periods. A flexible programme is provided for varying levels of energy throughout the day and allows children to work and play at their own pace.

Equipment and apparatus are chosen giving due consideration to both large and small motor skills with the aim to challenging children in a safe environment to improve co-ordination. Children are encouraged to learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies.

EXPRESSIVE ART DEVELOPMENT

Creativity is crucial to learning. The areas of art, music, dance, drama and imaginative play help children make conceptual links to other subjects.

Children need opportunities to develop a wonder and appreciation of the natural world and of creativity. They need opportunities to develop positive attitudes to their creative work and to value that of others. This includes respecting other children's efforts and appreciating the richness and interest in materials which they can explore. It is important that children experience a rich range of resources that reflect our multi-cultural society.

We shall provide a variety of materials and media for both two- and three-dimensional work. Children will be introduced to skills to facilitate their creativity. Through music, dance and drama, children will be given the opportunity to express and communicate their ideas, thoughts and feelings.

PLAY

Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS (DfES 2007 pg5). The development of learning in these seven areas will be supported by the opportunity to play in different areas.

IMAGINATIVE ROLE PLAY

Role play areas will reflect the current theme when appropriate. Consideration has been given to ensure that resources reflect a variety of cultures, promoting equality of race and gender. Role-play areas provide opportunity to read, write and use numbers in the context of play.

SOUND AND MUSIC

Children will have the opportunity to play with tuned and un-tuned instruments.

BOOK CORNER

Books are available and we have a dedicated reading area both inside and outside. Children enjoy stories every day in key groups and whole class situations.

CREATIVE AREA

In this area of the classroom children have constant access to a wide range of materials. Children are encouraged to develop their own creative ideas and are given opportunity to work on a project over a period. Children also engage in directed activities that teach skills and knowledge.

EXPLORATION

Resources are provided that encourage children to ask questions and to discover answers for themselves, through problem solving and discovery. Resources will reflect current topics and will include resources such as magnets, magnifying glasses, mirrors, natural and manufactured objects. Children will be encouraged to sort and classify resources.

NUMERACY INTERACTIVE AREA

This area has been developed to give children constant access to mathematical resources as a play-based learning experience. Children are encouraged to problem solve, sort, use numbers, explore time, make patterns and count in a playful way. Opportunity to write and record in a play context is given.

WRITING

In this area, children are encouraged to mark make as appropriate to their interest and stage of development. Children are encouraged to link this area to role-play areas. Children have access to a range of resources that are changed to support children's interests. Alphabet, key word cards and name cards are available to support writing.

CONSTRUCTION

A wide range of construction materials is available to support different needs and abilities. Children have access to construction toys that develop both fine and gross motor skills. Use of construction toys is linked to topic work when appropriate.

COOKING

Children will be given an opportunity to cook in the classroom, with priority given to safety. Children have experience of following recipes, creating own recipes and making and tasting foods from their own and different ethnic origins.

SAND, WATER AND MATERIALS

Children have access to a sandpit. Resources within these areas are changed to develop different types of skills and investigation. Materials are changed to engage children's interest e.g. wet and dry sand, stones, twigs, coloured water, sparkling water, rice and pasta.

NATURAL INVESTIGATION AREA

Children have access to compost as part of their exploration. This will be bought from garden centres and children will wear gloves whilst using it and be supported to wash their hands after use.

MALLEABLE MATERIALS

Children will have the opportunity to use a variety of malleable materials including play-dough, modelling dough and clay. The colour, smell and texture of play-dough and equipment to use with it are changed regularly.

PHYSICAL PLAY

Children have access to an outdoor play area, which offers physical play opportunities that promote both fine and gross motor skills. Children have access to ride on, balancing, climbing and bat and ball type equipment. Children also have opportunity to develop physical skills in the hall area.

SMALL WORLD/TABLE TOP ACTIVITIES

Small world activities encourage children to act out and create stories and situations. Maps, mats and natural resources are given to develop and enhance play.

Tabletop activities are used to develop children's fine motor, numeracy and literacy skills. Children play independently or with others in a co-operative manner. When buying new resources care is taken to ensure these resources reflect a multi-cultural society that promotes equal opportunities.

OUTDOOR AREA

This area offers opportunities for learning in all seven areas of learning. It is recognised as an extension classroom and children's interests are developed in the same way as the indoor classroom.

ENTRY PROFILE

A school entry profile is used to enable the teacher to build up a picture of 'where the child is' when they start school. It consists of:-

1. *Information about the child gathered from their parents the term before they start school*
2. *A meeting with child and parents*
3. *Visits or phone calls to other settings by nursery teacher*
4. *Observations of children during their visits to classroom and outdoor play area during the year prior to attendance, and*
5. *An initial teacher assessment using the Foundation Stage Profile, ages and stages.*

ASSESSMENT

Throughout the department, children will be observed and assessed through classroom activities and play in all 7 areas of the curriculum. Formative assessment based on observations, photographs, video, things children have made or drawn and information from parents, is used to inform or guide everyday planning.

Planning is assessment driven and clear individual next steps for each child are identified on literacy and numeracy plans.

The EYFS Profile is the summative assessment completed by practitioners at the end of the EYFS, this is the summary of all the formative assessment done over a long period and makes statements about the child's achievements.

During the year, children's progress and achievements are shared regularly with parents. At the end of Reception, the final achievements are assessed against the early learning goals and reported to the LA. The profile is then used to produce a document that reflects progress made by learners and identifies strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning over the year. Targets for the following year are identified for both learners and practitioners. As identified in the EYFS 'high quality early years experience includes a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success'. (DfES 2007 pg 10).

PLANNING

Planning is the responsibility of the class teachers who ensure a comprehensive curriculum. Planning is developed using the Early Years Foundation Stage Document.

- There is a balance of activities and experiences that encompass each area of learning.
- Childs voice and reflections on learning is encouraged.
- The spontaneous and integrated nature of children's learning is recognised.
- It is recognised that children's learning is not necessarily sequential, and they will need time and opportunity to consolidate, repeat, extend their learning in their own individual ways.
- Assessments are used to inform planning to successfully move children's learning on.

THE THREE LEVELS OF PLANNING

Long-term planning provides a broad framework for learning opportunities. It ensures coverage of all areas of the curriculum while demonstrating coherence and balance between areas of learning.

Medium-term planning specifies in more detail the learning activities and objectives for each term. Identifies thematic units of work while allowing for moderation based on children's interests.

Short-term planning gives detail of teaching and learning activities while making provision for modification when observation and assessment identify individual needs or interests. There is provision for spontaneous planning to meet children's needs, interests and initiatives. Planning demonstrates opportunities to learn indoors and outdoors.

Adapting, appropriate support and intervention, deployment of adults and assessment opportunities are identified.

If the children do not achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, an appropriate curriculum will be provided in Year 1.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Early Years Practitioners at St Barnabas Primary School recognise that a well-planned, stimulating environment that promotes independence and active learning is central to purposeful learning experiences. At St Barnabas Primary School, this environment extends from the classroom to an outdoor area where it is recognised the learning opportunities have equal merit to class based experiences.

The environment we create for our children will:-

- Be clean, attractive and welcoming to children and their parents.
- Be a safe and secure place, facilitating children to develop confidence and independence.
- Be stimulating, exciting and encourage exploration and discovery.
- Value children's own work and have work displayed attractively.
- Ensure that children have the opportunity to play individually or in small groups.
- Provide opportunities for children to be quiet, noisy and messy.
- Encourage children to be creative in all areas of learning.
- Encourage children to talk to each other and adults. To ask questions and facilitate them to find they own answers when appropriate.

SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

Safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures apply to the EYFS. Copies are available in the school office.

RESOURCES

Funding the Early Years will be within the school budget plan for each financial year. EYFS co-ordinator will annually review provision and target resources appropriately.