



Foundation Stage Policy

1 Introduction

All young children in our nursery and reception class are entitled to high quality educational provision so that they are helped to become confident, effective and independent learners. This means that:

- The early years are recognised as a vital stage in children's physical, linguistic, intellectual and emotional development
- Children are placed at the centre of the learning and teaching enterprise
- All children are valued, included and safe
- Children engage in adult directed activities and in those which they initiate themselves
- Play is valued as a key way in which children learn
- The partnerships between home and school is positively nurtured
- The curriculum is relevant, imaginative and stimulating
- Practitioners are effectively trained and knowledgeable in promoting challenging and enjoyable learning for young children
- Implementation, provision and practice are coherent in their aspirations for excellence in promoting early learning and teaching

The foundation stage policy is written for all new and existing staff, student, visitors, parents and governors. It provides guidance and understanding about teaching and learning in our nursery and reception.

2 Teaching and learning in Nursery and Reception

2.1 The following characteristics are vital to children's learning:

- First hand experiences
- Interacting with others
- Being physically active
- Having their interests taken seriously
- Play

Young children require;

- Adults, who support, encourage and interact with them in meaningful ways individually and in groups
- An interesting, stimulating and safe environment to investigate, with time to investigate this
- Extended opportunities for well-supported play (as this is an important way that they make sense of their world)

3 Play in the Foundation Stage

3.1 Play is crucial in the Foundation Stage. For young children, there is no distinction between 'play' and 'work'. Play is the child's work. Play is an effective and valuable approach to learning. It allows children to explore and

discover. It develops language as they interact and reflect on their activities. It allows children to repeat activities and consolidate learning.

4 What children will learn

- 4.1** An effective early years curriculum for young children takes account of how they learn and the abilities, knowledge and understanding, which they bring with them to school. The Foundation Stage curriculum emphasises, personal social and emotional development, language and literacy and mathematics.

The Early Learning Goals specify the attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding most children should acquire by the time they leave reception class. They are divided into six areas of learning, namely:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Language and Literacy
- Mathematics
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development

These areas of learning are used when planning the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Reference should be made to `Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stageq which became part of the national curriculum in September 2002.

5 Teaching Strategies

- 5.1** Teaching strategies for the foundation stage need to take account of children's self-initiated learning, providing a balance of child initiated and adult led activities.

Teaching strategies to ensure high quality initiated learning:

- Providing a stimulating learning environment inside and outside, with provision arranged into different types of play
- Staff involvement in children's chosen activities and play

Teaching strategies for adult led activities:

- Planned `focused activitiesqfor specific children, any child who wishes to join in, or for every child to do. The activity should be suitably differentiated to meet the learning needs of every child
- Whole class teaching

Observation is an important teaching strategy used in the foundation stage, showing children's interests as well as current skills knowledge and understanding. This information has implications for the approach taken in teaching as well as the actual activities and experiences planned. Resources and equipment should be accessible to the children in order to teach them to be autonomous and independent.

6 Broad Guidelines for Good Practice

At Parkwood, we aim to plan for continuity of learning across nursery and reception and continuity with Key Stage 1.

Our long-term plan involves planning main topic themes on a two-year cycle, so that the areas of knowledge are varied and appropriate to the children's development. We plan around the same topic, such as Ourselves, Celebrations or Food. These are broad topics and can be differentiated to allow children to explore skills and concepts at a variety of different levels.

Our medium term plans cover half a term's work, showing the skills, concepts and knowledge that will be taught, broken down into weekly sections.

Our short-term plans show specific learning objectives to be taught daily over a weekly period, involving a balance of adult led and children initiated learning experiences in both nursery and reception. Half termly and weekly plans are written for each year group however; we do exchange ideas and plans where relevant. Observations and assessments of children's progress inform short term planning in both nursery and reception.

7 Assessment

- 7.1** Assessment needs to be formative and summative and at Parkwood, we use assessment procedures in this way.
- 7.2** We use a record of achievement, as suggested by the Learning Trust's Early Years Adviser, divided into the six areas of learning, which allows for detailed tracking of each child's progress. All staff are involved in this process. Assessments should be written in a positive way and be open to all staff in the school.
- 7.3** The Foundation Stage Profile is an important assessment tool. This will be introduced in 2003 as a replacement for baseline assessment. It will allow practitioners in Reception to keep a detailed record of each child's progress over the year. To assist in tracking progress, we have followed the recommendation of the early years adviser, and formally assess children, using the same format, at least seven weeks after their entry to reception. In this way, a 'baseline' can be preserved and informed planning conducted based on this initial assessment.
- 7.4** Parents are strongly encouraged to be involved in their child's development. We maintain regular dialogue with parents, and encourage them to come into school and be with their children once they have settled successfully. Formal meetings are held with parents each term to report on their child's progress. In addition, nursery staff meets parents before the child starts in nursery, and reception staff meet all parents before children transfer to reception. Annual reports are written for full time nursery children transferring to reception and the end of the reception year.

8 Classroom Organisation

- 8.1** Young children learn through play, they need to access to a varied and well-resourced classroom. Foundation Stage classrooms are set up to allow for provision of areas for play and children's self initiated learning, such as sand and water trays, home corner and other role play areas, attractive book areas and spaces for small world and construction. The classrooms are organised to give the children space to move about safely and with ease.
- 8.2** Resources should be stored and clearly labelled with words and pictures so that the children can access them and put them away. Our aim is to encourage children to take care of them and show respect when using them.
- 8.3** Displays are an important aspect of the learning environment and they need to be supportive to children's learning and be changed frequently to maintain interest. Interact and child initiated display are also very important in the foundation stage.

9 Outdoor Provision

- 9.1** Outdoor provision is essential in the foundation stage, in terms of physical development and in terms of intellectual and social development. At Parkwood the nursery has free access to outdoor space, and the learning environment outside is set up to support and extend children's learning. The outside environment and activities need to be planned for varied regularly to maximise learning opportunities and to cover all aspects of the curriculum.

We aim to give access to the outside area for extended periods of time all year round, although on occasions the range of activities may be affected by the weather.

Out door provision is equally important at the reception stage and the reception children share the space and activities at certain times of the day.

10 Partnership with Parents

At Parkwood we try to involve parents in other aspects of school life. We welcome parents to stay and spend time with their child, to participate in the day-to-day activities of the children, as well as in special events such as school trips and fund raising events. We aim to build up relationships to make them feel welcome in the school and so take an active interest in their child's education throughout their education.

11 Equal Opportunities and Children with English as an Additional Language

In our school, we have a rich variety of cultures and home languages. This makes our school an interesting and exciting environment in which to teach and learn and we believe this rich diversity should be respected, valued and celebrated. Children, especially in the foundation stage, will need support and time in learning English, as for many; this will be their first experience of English. We also believe that all children, regardless of race, culture, gender, disability or special need, should be given an equality in all school experiences and each

individual can make an important contribution to school life. This issue of equal opportunities should be permeating all aspects of nursery and reception life.

12 Staff Training and Development

All staff working in the foundation stage has access to early years training provided by the local education authority and other establishments, appropriate to their needs and the school development plan. It is important that all foundation stage staff have opportunities to keep in touch with current developments in the early years field and take part in early years inset days. Issues associated with the foundation stage should be allocated discussion time at some staff meetings to ensure all staff understand and value early years education.

13 Monitoring and Evaluating

The Foundation Stage policy should be read by all staff and discussed and followed by all foundation stage staff. Practice in reception and nursery should reflect it. The policy should be reviewed annually by the Early Years Co-ordinator and any modifications need to be discussed by the foundation stage team and the headteacher.

Signed:

Date: