



BURTONWOOD C.P. SCHOOL
POLICY FOR
EARLY YEARS EDUCATION 2014

"Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to their full 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. When parents/carers choose to use early years services they want to know the provision will keep their child safe and help them to thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is the framework that provides that assurance."
(EYFS)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. In our school, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- A Unique child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development

Within these principles there are seven areas of learning and development:

Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

The Early Years Foundation Stage also supports children in four specific areas through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;

- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

The Nature of Early Years Education

In this policy the early years of education refers to children under the age of five and to all children in the last year of the foundation stage, the reception year.

Our aims are:

- to provide a safe, secure, stable environment where all children can make progress in all areas of learning and development including physical, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural and spiritual.
- to provide an entitlement curriculum that is relevant to the world in which we live.
- to help provide our children with consistency, continuity and progression throughout their entire school life, by working in partnership with parents and school colleagues.

Principles of teaching and learning in the Early Years

Teaching and learning in the Early Years will be based on three key principles.

- **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; and
- **creating and thinking critically** - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Early years teaching is based on active learning through play and is a mixture of child-initiated and adult-initiated or directed activities.

The fundamental skills, knowledge, concepts and attitudes to be developed in the Early Years are set out in the DFE Document "Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage."

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.
- **Literacy** development involves encouraging children to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** involves providing children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** involves enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

The early learning goals provide the basis for planning throughout the foundation stage and establish expectations for most children to reach by the end of the foundation stage.

Implementation

The reception class is in a self-contained area which has its own toilets, washbasins and safe access to a covered outdoor classroom which opens

onto a contained outdoor area with a grassed section. Safe use of equipment is taught and the idea of a safe environment is promoted.

The reception class has its own well-ordered, easily accessible resource area. The class has been organised into areas including a writing area, number area, reading room, creative area, role play area and play-dough area. The outdoor classroom mirrors these areas and also includes a water and sand tray and areas for physical development. The classroom has been organised to ensure that the children have access to resources which meet all of the objectives of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The Early Years curriculum is organised on an integrated thematic approach with due regard to each area of learning.

Themes or topics follow children's current interests and are implemented after observing the children during their self-initiated play.

The emphasis in our teaching in the reception class is on first hand quality experiences. Real objects and materials enable children to explore and extend what they know and can do. Learning experiences are presented in practical activities as young children learn primarily through actions rather than instructions. Early years teaching always starts with what the children already know and then takes knowledge forward.

Children work individually, in pairs, in small groups and in whole class situations. Groups can be determined by friendship, self-choice and mixed or matched ability, depending on the activity.

Equal opportunities

Activities within the classroom and further afield are planned to encourage full and active participation of all children whatever their race, gender or ability, ensuring that individual potential is met.

Role of Parents

Parents are encouraged to become involved in their child's education.

The early years teacher holds a meeting with the parents of pre-school children in the term before admission. At this meeting the ethos of the school in general and the aims, procedures and expectations of early years are explained to parents. Parents of pre-school children receive

copies of the Starting School booklet and the School Prospectus at the meeting.

Parents also accompany children into school during their first morning in September and help the children to settle into their new school. This visit also allows parents time to experience the classroom routines and explore resources with their child.

Admission

New intake children are introduced to the reception class during the Summer Term before admission. All children are admitted during the first half term of the school year in which they become five, initially on a part-time basis.

Assessment

The children in reception are assessed continually throughout their time in the foundation Stage. The children are observed in their self-initiated play and also during focused tasks. This ensures the early detection of possible special needs and enables appropriate planning of tasks and support to be implemented.

Reporting to parents

In the reception class this is on a termly basis through interviews and a written report. Parents are also informed of particular milestones achieved or difficulties encountered during informal chats at the start and end of the school day. Parents are also able to access their child's learning journey and can make contributions based on their child's learning at home.