



Early Years Policy 2018

Date: 19th April 2018

Revision Date and Frequency: Every 2 years

Distributed to Staff: after FGB: 20th April 2018

Lead Person(s): L. Roberts, Early Years Leader

Ratification by: FGB

Statutory Policy: No

Policy Author: L. Roberts, Early Years Leader

'Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support to fulfil 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

Aims & Objectives

At Burdett-Coutts we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. We aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. We will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

At Burdett-Coutts we will:

- Provide a happy, safe, stimulating and challenging programme of learning and development for the children to experience as they begin their journey through school.
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for further learning and development in Key Stage 1 and beyond and enable choice and decision making, fostering independence and self-confidence.
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress.
- Develop relationships with parents and carers to build a strong partnership in supporting their children.
- Provide a caring and inclusive learning environment which is sensitive to the requirements of the individual child including those who have additional needs.

The early years education we offer our children is based on the following principles:

- It builds on what our children already know and can do;
- It ensures that no child is excluded or disadvantaged;



Early Years Policy 2018

- It offers a structure for learning that has a range of starting points, content that matches the needs of young children, and activities that provide opportunities for learning both indoors and outdoors;
- It provides a rich and stimulating environment;
- It acknowledges the importance of a full working partnership with parents and carers.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on four themes:

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

A Unique Child

At Burdett-Coutts we recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. 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 children to develop a positive attitude to learning.

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and believe that every child is important. All children at Burdett-Coutts should expect to be treated fairly, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion or ability. All families are valued within our school.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their personal best and planning is adapted to meet the needs of all children. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when we are planning for their learning.

In the Foundation Stage we set realistic and challenging expectations keyed to the needs of our children, so that most achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage. We do this through:

- Planning opportunities that build upon and extend children's knowledge, experience and interests, and develop their self-esteem and confidence;
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies based on children's learning needs;
- Providing a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them learn effectively;
- Offering a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued;
- Employing resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping;



Early Years Policy 2018

- Planning challenging activities to meet the needs of both boys and girls, of children with special educational needs, of children who are more able, of children with disabilities, of children from all social and cultural backgrounds, of children from different ethnic groups, and of those from diverse linguistic backgrounds;
- Monitoring children's progress and taking action to provide support as necessary (such as referrals to speech therapy) as necessary.
- Working closely with parents, carers and other outside agencies to ensure all children's needs are met and we enable them to access the curriculum and make good progress.

Positive Relationships

At Burdett-Coutts we recognise that children learn to be strong, confident and independent from being in secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and most enduring educators and we value being partners with them in their child's education through:

- Talking to parents/carers before their child starts school at our open days and parent meetings.
- Providing information about starting Nursery and/or Reception at Burdett-Coutts.
- Outlining expectations in the Home-School agreement.
- Holding a parent consultation early in the academic year to establish how a child is settling into the school environment.
- Operating an open-door policy for parents/carers with any queries or concerns. Conversely, if Foundation staff have concerns about the progress of a child, they will approach parents and carers to discuss them.
- Written contact through termly class newsletters and weekly school newsletters.
- Inviting parents/carers to work on topic related activities and reading at home with their child to support the learning in school
- Offering parent/teacher consultation meetings per year at which their child's progress is discussed.
- Sending a written report on their child's attainment and progress at the end of their time in Nursery and Reception.
- Parents are invited to a range of activities throughout the school year such as class assemblies, parent workshops, Christmas productions, Collective Worship and Sports Day etc.
- Offering a range of activities, throughout the year, to encourage specific collaboration between child, school and parents e.g. sharing a story during Book Week, creative arts workshops, Eid celebrations etc.



Early Years Policy 2018

Enabling Environments

At Burdett-Coutts we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development, where the children feel confident, secure and challenged. The children have daily access to an indoor and outdoor environment that is set up in discrete areas of learning with planned continuous provision.

Play-based learning is paramount and children have opportunities to direct their own learning with planned opportunities provided by staff. We plan a learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, that encourages a positive attitude to learning and reflects the individual's interests, passions and abilities.

We use materials and equipment that reflect both the community that the children come from and the wider world. We encourage the children to make their own selection of the activities on offer, as we believe that this encourages independent learning. We ensure that resources and spaces are safe to use and checked regularly.

Learning and Developing

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the areas of learning identified in Development Matters.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational provision in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across a number of learning areas. They require a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities in order for most children to reach the levels required at the end of EYFS.

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. The three Prime areas are: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication and Language and Physical Development. Staff will also support children in four Specific areas, through which the three Prime areas are strengthened and applied.

These are: Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the world and Expressive arts and design. Children's development levels are assessed and as the year progresses, the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all areas of learning, as children grow in confidence and ability within the three prime areas.

Reception pupils also participate in a daily phonics session, following the "Read, Write, Inc." Scheme, in line with school policy.



Early Years Policy 2018

Characteristics of Effective Learning

We ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

Playing and exploring

'Children's play reflects their wide ranging and varied interests and preoccupations. In their play children learn at their highest level. Play with peers is important for children's development.'

Children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'. Through play, our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. They have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems.

Active learning

'Children learn best through physical and mental challenges. Active learning involves other people, objects, ideas and events that engage and involve children for sustained periods.'

Children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements. Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Creating and thinking critically

"When children have opportunities to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources, they discover connections and come to new and better understandings and ways of doing things. Adult support in this process enhances their ability to think critically and ask questions."

We encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things. Children should be given the opportunity to be creative through all areas of learning. Adults can support children's thinking and help them make connections by showing interest, offering encouragement, clarifying ideas and asking open ended questions. Children can access resources and move around the classroom freely and purposefully to extend their learning.



Early Years Policy 2018

Observations

Foundation Stage staff use observations as the basis for planning. Staff are skilled at observing children to identify their achievements, interests and next steps for learning. These observations then lead the direction of the planning. Relevant and significant observations are recorded in the children's portfolios.

Assessment

During the first term in Nursery and Reception, the teacher assesses the ability of each child using a baseline test. These assessments allow us to identify patterns of attainment within the cohort, in order to adjust the teaching programme for individual children and groups of children.

The Foundation Stage Profile is the nationally employed assessment tool that enables teachers to record their observations at the end of the Foundation Stage, and to summarise their pupils' progress towards the Early Learning Goals.

It covers each of the seven areas of learning contained in the Curriculum Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage. We record each child's level of development against the 17 Early Learning Goals as Emerging, Expected or Exceeding. We make regular assessments of children's learning, and we use this information to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, photographic evidence and through planned activities. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teacher and other adults, as appropriate. The collection of assessment data in the Foundation Stage Profile is a statutory requirement.

Portfolios of a child's work contain a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting. We record each child's level of development to be just working towards, comfortably working within or securely working within the Development Matters age-bands. At the end of the final term in Reception we send a summary of these assessments to the Local Authority for analysis.

The child's next teacher uses this information to make plans for the year ahead. Parents receive an annual written report at the end of the year that offers brief comments on each child's progress in each area of learning. It highlights the child's strengths and development needs and gives details of the child's general progress.



Early Years Policy 2018

The Learning Environment

The Foundation Stage classroom is organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, creative etc. Children have access to both inside and outside area across the day; this has a positive effect on the children's development. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside as well as inside.

Teaching & Learning

The features of effective teaching and learning in our school are defined in our policy. Good EYFS practice in our school includes:

- the partnership between teachers and parents, carers and other settings that helps our children to feel secure at school, and to develop a sense of well-being and achievement;
- the understanding that teachers have of how children develop and learn, and how this must be reflected in their teaching;
- the range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions, and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication;
- the carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage;
- the provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests, and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities;
- the encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning, and to develop independence and self-management;
- the support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents;
- the good relationships between our school and the other educational settings in which the children have been learning before joining our school;

Transition

Starting school can be a challenging time for young children and their parent/carer. We therefore plan this time carefully to support children with the transition and to ensure it is as smooth as possible for each child and that they settle in to their new class quickly and happily.

Starting Nursery: Parents/carers and their child are invited into the Nursery for a meeting with the teacher and an opportunity to stay and play and meet the Nursery staff before they start in our Nursery.



Early Years Policy 2018

Starting Reception: Parents of all children starting in the next academic year will be invited to an Induction Meeting in the Summer term to meet their child's new teacher and other key staff and learn more about the Reception curriculum. The children are given an opportunity to come in to school to meet their new class teacher and other children in their class. In September we operate a staggered entry over the first couple weeks of term to enable the needs of children to be more closely supported.

Starting Year 1 - Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon and many of the teaching and support staff will already be familiar people to them. They will have taken part in Key Stage and whole school assemblies as well as sharing playtimes with the Key Stage 1 children. Children have the opportunity to meet their new class teacher and spend a morning in their new class during the summer term.

Safeguarding & Welfare

'Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met, and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.'

(Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014)

At Burdett-Coutts we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2014.

- Provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;
- Promote good health;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual need
- Ensure that all adults who look after the children, or who have unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so;
- Ensure that the setting, furniture and equipment is safe and suitable for the purpose it was intended for It is important to us that all children in the school are 'safe'.
- We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why they exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this important life skill. We encourage children to take risks and highlight the importance of keeping themselves safe by teaching them how to recognise and avoid hazards. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children, as described in our Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the EYFS leader to carry out monitoring of the EYFS as part of the whole school monitoring schedule.

This policy will be reviewed in two years or as necessary.