

Early Years Foundation Stage

“The goal of early childhood education should be to activate the child’s own natural desire to learn.”
María Montessori

Intent

Our vision statement, ‘Be Your Best’ reflects our belief that every child deserves the best possible start in life and our EYFS curriculum has been designed to enable children to fulfil their potential. Our EYFS curriculum enables children to develop and learn at their own individual rates and takes into account children’s prior learning, both from their experiences at home and at previous settings. We form strong partnerships with parents, carers and other settings at the beginning of a child’s time in school. This ensures every child makes a positive start to their school journey and they are nurtured to reach their full potential from their individual starting point.

Our school values and learning behaviours underpin our EYFS curriculum. Every child is seen as a unique individual who has the capabilities to be resilient, happy, compassionate, confident and self-assured learners. Our enabling environments with effective teaching and support from adults equips children with the skills and behaviours to become lifelong learners. Children’s individual interests and needs are reflected within the EYFS provision and this helps them to build and develop their learning, knowledge and skills over time.

By the end of the Reception year, our intent is to ensure that all children make good progress from their starting points and are equipped with the foundational skills and knowledge for a smooth transition into Year One and the National Curriculum. EYFS teachers have a good understanding of how the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) feed into the National Curriculum through our robust planning and CPD opportunities. In reverse, colleagues throughout the school are also aware of the key ELG’s that link to each foundation subject and the progression of the subject.

Implementation

Children in EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active and thinking critically and creatively and this takes place both indoors and in our outdoor area. Teachers ensure that there are opportunities for all areas of learning both inside and outside.

Learning is based around weekly themes and are introduced to provide inspiration for learning, whilst providing the flexibility for children to follow their own interests and ideas. Children learn through a balance of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. They are provided with opportunities to engage in ‘exploration’ through the variety of experiences carefully planned to engage and challenge them in the provision. Teachers systematically check for understanding, identify and respond to misconceptions quickly and provide real-time verbal feedback which results in a strong impact on the acquisition of new learning. Each day is carefully structured so that children have directed teaching at key points throughout the day. The ratio of child-initiated and adult-directed activities evolves throughout the year to take into consideration the changing needs and development of the class.

Ongoing observations inform weekly planning and identify children's next steps. This formative assessment is 'in the moment'. Practitioners draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgements through discussions with other practitioners, photographs and physical examples such as a child's drawing/writing.

Children who are at risk of falling behind are identified through both formative and summative assessments. From the beginning of children to 'keep up' rather than 'catch up' where possible. Early effective and focused intervention is given to those children who are finding learning challenging and are not on track to meet expectations at the end of the year. This early intervention combined with strong parental partnerships ensure that every child makes good progress from their individual starting point.

Regular monitoring of teaching and learning by SLT and the EYFS leader ensure staff develop good subject knowledge.

A strong emphasis on the Prime Areas of learning; Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development and Communication and Language, equips children with a secure foundation upon which to build further skills. We recognise the importance of a language rich environment where adults engage children in high quality conversations throughout the day, extending vocabulary and explaining new words. Warm, purposeful and skilful adult interactions support the children as they begin to link learning to their play and exploration. These supportive relationships with adults in the EYFS setting create a secure foundation to support children to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves goals and have confidence in their abilities.

Literacy:

- Our book-based literacy sessions utilise a wide range of high quality literature that will engage children to be critical readers whilst becoming confident and informed writers.
- Whole class storytimes, using high quality books, where adults read aloud to children take place daily. These reflect children's own experiences as well as perspectives that differ from their own.
- There is an emphasis on repetition of favourite stories. Through this, children begin to internalise new vocabulary, language patterns and begin to retell stories.
- Stories are used to expose children to vocabulary that they may not hear in everyday conversation. These aspirational, 'second tier' words are explored on a daily basis.
- Familiar and favourite stories are dramatised with children during role-play and drama sessions.
- A daily poetry, rhyme and singing session ensures children make strong emotional connections to language.
- A systematic, synthetic phonics programme (Read, Write Inc.) is taught daily to develop children's phonemic awareness rapidly. A combination of high-quality whole-class and group teaching is used.
- Phonics progress expectations are set for each half term. Children who are at risk of falling behind are identified using ongoing formative assessments and half-termly summative assessments. These children are given extra one-to-one and small group practice to enable them to keep up with their peers.
- Reading at home is actively promoted and parents are supported by teachers to see the benefits of sharing and talking about stories. Children participate in weekly library sessions and borrow books to read at retell at home. Children also take home a decodable book, matched to their phonological knowledge.

- Common exception words (red words) are taught as part of phonics sessions. Children take home a red words folder to practice red words linked to their stage of development.

Mathematics:

- A structured progression of skills and mathematical knowledge is used to teach children key mathematical concepts.
- Spatial reasoning skills and a strong grounding in number and the mastery of concepts before moving on ensures that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically.
- Concrete manipulatives and pictorial structures and representations are used to support children in their mathematical development. The EYFS continuous and enhanced provision allows opportunities for these to be rehearsed applied and recorded within child-led exploration.
- The language-rich classroom develops a secure base of vocabulary where mathematical language is encouraged and used throughout the day by adults in a range of contexts. Positive attitudes and interests in maths are fostered and nurtured through these high quality interactions between both adults and children.
- Fluency is developed through revisiting key concepts regularly throughout the year, both in and out of maths sessions.

Wider Curriculum

- Our wider curriculum is taught through the learning areas; ‘Understanding of the World’ and ‘Expressive Arts and Design.’
- Stories, non-fiction books, rhymes and poems are used to foster children’s understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. This enriches and widens children’s vocabulary, understanding and knowledge across domains.
- Building further on our language-rich environment, children are encouraged to employ subject specific language and terminology, and such vocabulary will be modelled by supporting adults.
- Weekly outdoor learning sessions are opportunities for children to become familiar and confident in the world around them. These provide opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in the natural world.
- The arts and culture are recognised as a starting point for children to develop language and communication skills as well as enabling them to explore self-expression, imagination and creativity. Children are offered a variety of experiences throughout the provision enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials.
- Enrichment activities are utilised to enable all children to gain ‘real-life’, hands-on experiences. These enrichment activities include visitors into school, educational visits, partnership work with the Tendring Creative Arts Network and the Royal Opera House Bridge.

Impact

Children reaching the end of Foundation stage at Bradfield Primary School will have been exposed to wide ranging experiences and learning opportunities. These experiences will allow our children to become well rounded, enthusiastic, innovative and successful learners. They will embody our school values, displaying characteristics of honesty, compassion, integrity and respect. Our curriculum will

have enabled children to make sense of the world around them and develop an understanding of their rights and the rights of others in an ever evolving world. Children will have developed essential knowledge and skills required for everyday life and will be able to apply their knowledge to a range of situations making links and explaining their ideas and understanding. Our EYFS curriculum ensures that children are fully prepared for the next stage of their education as they transition into Year One.

At the end of EYFS our children;

- Display strong communication skills,
- Listen respectfully and with tolerance to the views of others,
- Take pride in all that they do, always striving to be their best,
- Demonstrate emotional resilience and the ability to persevere when they encounter challenge,
- Display a sense of self-awareness and become confident in their own abilities,
- Are kind, respectful and honest, demonstrate inclusive attitudes and have a sense of their role in our wider society.

Achievements are shared and celebrated during assemblies and in whole class sessions where children have the opportunity to share their home learning. D