

Priory Infant School

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Introduction

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of Early Years learning and teaching at Priory Infant School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

“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.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage
Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives.

At

Priory Infant School, we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development, however we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.

The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the reception year. At Priory Infant School, the EYFS applies to the children in our two Reception classes (Year R). These children will be five in their first year at Priory.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic well-being. At Priory Infant School, the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five “**Every Child Matters**” outcomes.

We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to his or her full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and learning and teaching is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates and with different needs and interests.

At Priory Infant School, we aim to:

- provide a safe, challenging, stimulating and caring environment which is sensitive to the needs of every child
- provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development
- provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment
- use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- work in partnership with parents/guardians and value their contributions
- ensure that all children feel valued, respected and included and that classroom resources and activities reflect the culture and language of their homes.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is based upon four principles:

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

A Unique child

All children and their families and carers are valued within our school.

We believe that children should be treated as individuals and should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best and we help them to do this by planning to meet the needs of both boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups, and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Children's speech and language skills are screened and assessed on entry to Year R. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always work in partnership with parents and carers.

The school's SENCO is responsible for providing additional information and advice to staff, parents and carers and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. For further information see our Inclusion Policy.

Positive Relationships

At Priory Infant School, we recognise that children learn to be confident and independent through secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with all children and their families.

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators.

When parents/carers and Year R staff (practitioners) work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this. These include regular opportunities for parents/carers to visit classrooms and talk to staff, workshops, meetings and home-school communication books.

Young children need to develop relationships to support their emotional well-being and learning. Children with specific needs have a named key worker to provide them with the support and security they need. All children know who to go to for help and support.

Role of all adults in Year R

- To observe child-initiated play to understand and provide for every child's interests and needs.
- To plan and resource a challenging indoor and outdoor environment.
- To support children's learning through planned play activity.
- To extend and support children's spontaneous/self-initiated play.
- To extend and develop children's language and communication in their play.
- .To work in partnership with parents/carers
- .To work as an effective and supportive team

Enabling Environments

At Priory Infant School, we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development. We aim to provide an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and

confident, and are challenged to develop their independence. Our Year R classrooms are clean and well-organised with good quality resources. Activities for all six areas of learning are planned for in both the inside and outside environment. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom at specific times during the school day (child-initiated learning).

Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning is informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, experiences, development and learning needs.

Planning

The Reception classes organise the curriculum through agreed termly topics over the period of the academic year. The topics are flexible to ensure that they meet the needs and interests of all children as well as delivering a creative and balanced curriculum. Planning reflects a balance of the six areas of learning and development from the EYFS (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy, Problem solving, Reasoning and Numeracy, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Physical and Creative Development – see **Areas of Learning and Development**). The Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage are central to the planning, provision and safeguarding of our children.

Weekly plans are informed in two ways.

Firstly, they are informed through ongoing observations of child-initiated or spontaneous activity and planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. Through this, learning objectives for the following week are identified.

Secondly, plans are informed by referring to medium term plans containing objectives and activities/experiences linked with the term's topic.

When planning for Communication, Language and Literacy and Problem Solving,

Reasoning and Numeracy in the Reception classes, we follow the Early Learning Goals and, where necessary, additional statements set out in the *Primary Framework for literacy and mathematics* (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006). Plans are monitored by the EYFS Leader, and Deputy Head.

Assessment and Recordkeeping

At Priory, assessment and recordkeeping begin on first contact with the children and parents/carers during familiarisation and home visits. These assessments and observations are included in the children's *Learning Journeys* –'scrapbooks' of evidence and home contributions that chart each child's progress through their first year at school.

In Term 1, children are observed and assessed on the first three points of each area of learning. These observations, recorded in a booklet and via the Early Excellence Baseline Assessment Profile form the benchmark for all future learning and attainment.

We analyse and review what we know about each child's development and learning on a daily basis and then make informed decisions about supporting their progress. Observations (long, short, incidental and significant) and teacher assessments enable us to plan the next steps for individuals and groups of children. All practitioners who interact with the child contribute to the assessment process. Staff review the tracking data termly with the EYFS Leader and with the Head and SENCO during Pupil progress Reviews, monitoring rates of progress and identifying strategies that address learning and teaching priorities and next steps.

Formative assessment informs everyday planning and is based on on-going observational assessment of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles.

Formative assessment may take the form of anecdotal and focused narrative observations, other targeted assessments, annotated examples of work, photographs, and information from parents.

Summative assessment is used to summarise and record evidence from formative assessments and provides the basis of the end of year report (Foundation Stage Record of Achievement) that is shared with parents.

In Year R, the children are assessed against the EYFS Profile. This is a nationally employed assessment tool that makes statements about the child's achievements against the thirteen scales in the six EYFS areas of learning. It summarises children's progress towards the early learning goals and is completed each half-term by the Year R staff. This information is then recorded electronically.

Learning and Development

At Priory Infant School, we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Children learn through child-initiated and teacher-led play, whole class teacher inputs and small group activities/experiences.

Learning and Teaching

Effective learning and teaching is supported through:

- the partnership between staff and parents/carers that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement
- the understanding that staff have knowledge 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 most 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, including the effective use of ICT;
- the identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents/carers.

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of six areas of learning:

- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**
- **Communication, Language and Literacy**
- **Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy**
- **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**
- **Physical Development**
- **Creative Development**

While these six areas provide a framework for the early years' curriculum, young children's learning does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over several of the six areas at any one time. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELG's) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS. For more information on the different areas of learning, please visit

www.naa.org.uk/eyfsp.

Play and Exploration

“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.”

Early Years Foundation Stage Department for Children, Schools and Families
2007

At Priory Infant School, we do not make a distinction between learning and play. We support children’s learning through planned play activities, through observations of child-initiated or adult-led play activities and then provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support children’s learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example.

Well planned play, both indoors and outdoors is one of the key ways in which children learn. It is the process through which children can explore, investigate, recreate and come to understand their world. It is not just imaginative play and role play but includes spontaneous, self-initiated lines of inquiry and exploration. Play is a vital component of children’s lives. It is an important way skills are developed and practised. Play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

Principles of High Quality Play

- Play is an intrinsic part of children’s learning and development.
- Play has many possible but no prescriptive outcomes.
- Play challenges children and offers them the chance to learn in breadth and depth.
- Play draws on what children already know and can do and enables them to master what is new.
- Play enables children to apply existing knowledge and to practise their skills
- Play encourages children to communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.
- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas, and materials, connections and consequences.
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning.
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners.
- Play can be supported and extended but not interfered with by adults.
- Play presents no barriers to children because of their language, cultures, abilities or gender.

Next review: Spring 2017