

## Brookfield Primary School Early Years Foundation Stage Policy January 2016

### **Background**

Brookfield Primary School is a two-form entry state school for children aged 3 to 11. It is located in the north of Camden and has a diverse social and cultural intake. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) comprises two 30 place Reception classes and a 39 place Nursery Class, with the following staffing:

EYFS Phase Leader / Assistant Head		
Nursery	Class teacher, NNEB Nursery Nurse, Teaching Assistant, Early Years Apprentice, 2 x Lunchtime Assistants	Additional 'float' Early Years Apprentice working across both Nursery & Reception classes
Reception Class	Class teacher, NNEB Nursery Nurse, Early Years Apprentice	
Reception Class	Class teacher, Teaching Assistant, Early Years Apprentice	
There is also a named EYFS Link Governor on the Governing Body.		

### **Principles and Aims of the Foundation Stage**

At Brookfield we understand that, as the Development Matters non statutory guidance states: *'Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with people, and in the world around them. Development is not an automatic process, however. It depends on each unique child having opportunities to interact in positive relationships and enabling environments.'*

We aim, therefore, to provide those positive relationships and enabling environments that we know will lead to young children thriving at the beginning of their educational journey in school.

Within our EYFS, we want staff to build excellent relationships with the children and their families and to have high aspirations for all the children. We want them to support children in accessing rich learning experiences and opportunities; to understand that play underpins development and learning for young children; to have a thirst for continuing to develop their own pedagogy. We would like our early years to firmly establish a strong foundation in welcoming children and families to our school community. We would like children, families and staff to feel excited about being part of the EYFS at Brookfield. With these principles in mind we aim:

- To ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued
- To establish positive relationships with parents and children and provide them with a welcoming environment
- To work with parents in an atmosphere of mutual respect within which children can have security and confidence
- To encourage positive attitudes to learning, and to foster self-confidence, to help children make the best possible progress
- To build on what children already know and can do, and to celebrate achievement
- To provide a well-planned, organised and stimulating environment, which supports and extends knowledge, skills, understanding and independence

### **Equal opportunities**

At Brookfield, each child is valued and treated as an individual, and we have high aspirations for all. We aim to provide an environment which positively reflects and values diversity.

### **Admission arrangements**

- There is one intake for Nursery and Reception, in September each year. The vast majority of Nursery children attend full time, with a few parents opting for a part time place for their child. Admission to both Nursery and Reception is staggered, to aid the settling process at the beginning of the school year.
- We plan a range of activities to help ensure a smooth transition for the children into Nursery and Reception, such as liaison with feeder nurseries and children's centres; home visits for Nursery children; children visiting for lunch; information meetings for new parents; nursery taster sessions, and 'Coming to Brookfield Nursery/Reception' books for the children to borrow.

### **Partnership with Parents**

- We recognise that parents are their children's first and ongoing educators and we fully appreciate the contribution which they make. We really value all the learning which takes place at home, both before the children come to us and while they are with us.
- We welcome all children and families equally, and staff endeavour to model respectful relationships and open and honest communication at all times.
- Through establishing positive relationships and an ongoing dialogue with parents we aim to create an atmosphere where achievements may be celebrated and concerns shared at an early stage.
- When children enter the Foundation Stage, parents are given a 'Welcome to Brookfield Foundation Stage' booklet for either Nursery or Reception. This outlines routines and gives an overview of the curriculum. After approximately six weeks, a Settling Meeting is held with parents to discuss how their child has settled into Nursery and to plan the next steps. In Reception, a meeting for parents is held after about three weeks to explain routines etc and for parents to have the opportunity to ask questions.
- Curriculum Meetings provide a termly opportunity for parents to learn more about the Foundation Stage. There are also opportunities for parents to attend open mornings to see teaching and learning at first hand.
- Parents are encouraged to share skills and experiences – eg through helping with cooking sessions, or speaking to children about their working life, or cultural celebrations.
- Parents are kept informed of learning and events taking place through curriculum letters, class notice boards and the termly EYFS newsletter.
- Each class has a class parent rep to help share information and publicise events.
- Parents provide support as helpers on class visits, including the weekly Forest School sessions.

### **Teaching and Learning**

We aim to build on children's prior learning experiences and to enable all children to make good progress in all areas of their development. As part of the high quality 'enabling environment' we aim to provide, and in following the guidance linked to the prime and specific areas of the early years curriculum, children should:

- Be encouraged to follow their own interests
- Have access to a rich learning environment, both indoor and outdoor
- Be encouraged to develop positive relationships with their peers and adults, to benefit their social and emotional development
- Be given opportunities to develop their language and communication skills
- Have opportunities to be active and develop physically
- Be encouraged to represent their ideas and experiences in a wide range of ways – eg deepening their understanding through talk, pictures, role play, small world play, first hand investigation and movement

- Be supported in developing their mark making ability in a range of media
- Be supported in developing their mathematical understanding
- Have opportunities to learn in the natural environment as a key ongoing part of our provision
- Have access to a range of technology to support their learning
- Have opportunities to take part in a range of trips, workshops and cultural experiences
- Be supported in developing independence and resilience in their learning, and to persevere when faced with challenges
- Be helped to develop key skills to support their future learning
- Have fun!

### The Foundation Stage Curriculum

Our curriculum is planned in accordance with the seven areas of learning of the EYFS:

Area of Learning	Aspect
<b>Prime Areas</b>	
Personal, Social & Emotional Development	Making Relationships
	Self Confidence & Self Awareness
	Managing Feelings & Behaviour
Physical Development	Moving & Handling
	Health & Self-Care
Communication & Language	Listening & Attention
	Understanding
	Speaking
<b>Specific Areas</b>	
Literacy	Reading
	Writing
Mathematics	Numbers
	Shape, Space & Measure
Understanding the World	People & Communities
	The World
	Technology
Expressive Arts & Design	Exploring & Using Media & Materials
	Being Imaginative

All seven areas are important, but we recognise that the three prime areas underpin a child's readiness and capacity for learning and building relationships. In addition, we appreciate the importance of developing the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' through all activities the children undertake. These characteristics are:

**Playing & Exploring** – showing curiosity and finding things out; investigating and exploring things; showing a 'can do' attitude and being willing to have a go.

**Active Learning** – persisting with things when difficulties are encountered; concentrating; meeting challenges and taking pride in their accomplishments.

**Creating & Thinking Critically** – having ideas; noticing links between ideas; finding ways to solve problems and do new things.

In supporting the children to develop these attitudes and characteristics we are equipping them for lifelong learning, and building their learning power. In this way we aim to foster and encourage a 'growth mindset' in all our children.

- There are opportunities each day for children to engage in both child initiated and adult led activities, both indoors and outdoors. We aim for children to experience some group or whole class activities, and also to experience extended, uninterrupted opportunities for play.
- The learning environment, both inside and outdoors, is organised into different areas of provision (writing area, maths area, role play area, book corner, creative area, construction/small world area, sand & water play).
- Within these areas children can access resources to support their own learning and engage in child-planned activities. In addition, adults plan a range of activities, across the areas of learning, that children can select and access independently each day.
- Each session there are planned, adult led activities, where children work in a group with an adult. The focus of this will vary across the areas of learning. Each week there are adult focused activities to support mathematical development, communication and language, and literacy. In Reception there is a whole class introductory teaching input in either Literacy or Maths each day, and in addition, short, focused whole class sessions take place for specific activities, such as phonics or mental maths.
- Some group sessions are planned to support children's learning and development in a variety of areas – eg language and communication groups; small story groups; and finger fitness groups.
- Weekly music sessions in both Nursery and Reception are provided by a specialist teacher. Reception classes also benefit from a weekly PE session with our specialist 'Fit for Sport' staff.
- Resources are clearly labelled, organised and accessible in order that children might be self-managing and to promote children's independence. Children are encouraged to make independent choices in their learning, supported by clear routines, systems and structures.

### **The Prime and Specific Areas**

#### **Personal, Social and Emotional development**

We aim to:

- nurture self esteem and confidence
- establish caring relationships
- promote self respect and respect for others
- promote awareness and appreciation of different cultures
- encourage self-discipline
- encourage independent learning
- help children develop skills of co-operation and collaboration
- help children to learn to take changes of routine in their stride

This is achieved in a range of ways, including the provision of secure routines and a safe environment; ensuring there is time and space for children to focus on activities and experiences that develop their own interests; through circle time; by planning for and enabling children to work independently, and also in collaborative groups where they need to share and co-operate, and by agreeing class charters with the children, based around the UNCRC. Where there are concerns around personal, social and emotional development parents and staff are able to draw on the expertise of our weekly on-site Under Fives psychotherapeutic provision.

#### **Physical development**

- Children are encouraged to develop good control and co-ordination in large and small movements, and confidence in their abilities.
- A range of resources and activities both inside and outside help children to develop the necessary fine and gross motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination to handle equipment and tools (including pencils for writing) effectively.

- Children are encouraged and supported to manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs successfully.
- Children are taught how to keep healthy and safe, and to understand the importance of exercise and a healthy diet.

### **Communication and Language**

- Children are supported to express themselves effectively in a range of ways. Opportunities for children to communicate their thoughts, ideas and feelings, and to develop conversation with children and adults are given through activities such as group sessions and circle time, and through adults engaging with children throughout the day.
- All staff encourage the development of attentive listening, and support children to have the confidence to respond and communicate appropriately in a range of situations.

### **Literacy**

- Children are given opportunities to share and enjoy a wide range of rhymes, music, songs, poetry, stories and non-fiction books. Core books in Nursery develop familiarity with a bank of stories; Children's imaginative story telling is developed through activities such as role play, small world play, using puppets and sand and water play.
- Children's mark making and writing is promoted throughout the learning environment. There are opportunities for children to write in meaningful contexts, indoors and outside, including in the home corner, role-play, and construction areas – using a variety of writing materials and through the provision of a range of resources. Children gain confidence and competence in writing through a wide range of activities including emergent writing, shared and modelled writing, and through staff valuing their work.
- We aim to encourage handwriting skills by supporting fine motor control and hand-eye co-ordination through a range of activities including tactile and malleable play, and through supporting the children's gross motor development. We use the 'Penpals For Writing' materials, and provide a focus on letter formation in Letters and Sounds sessions.
- We promote written language through the use of signs and labels in the learning environment, and there are opportunities for children to see adults writing for a purpose.
- Children's phonological awareness and phonic knowledge is developed in a multi-sensory way through games and Letters and Sounds activities.

### **Mathematics**

- Children are encouraged to develop their mathematical understanding through practical activities and first hand experiences.
- A meaningful context is provided for maths through, for example, stories, role-play and cooking.
- Children have opportunities through a wide variety of experiences to develop their skills and understanding in counting, sorting, matching, ordering and calculating.
- Opportunities are provided to explore volume, capacity, shape and space in a range of activities such as sand and water play and construction activities.
- Children's use and understanding of mathematical language is developed, and open ended questions are used to encourage children's mathematical thinking and develop their problem solving skills.

### **Understanding the World**

In this area of learning, children are developing the knowledge, skills and understanding to help them make sense of the world.

- They are given opportunities for first hand experiences both indoors and outside to encourage them to explore, observe, predict, compare, solve problems, question, make decisions, discuss, think, and use all their senses.
- They are encouraged to talk about events in their own lives, and to recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.
- The children develop computing skills through the use of CD players, computers and tablets and the use of the Smart Board. Reception classes have designated time in the Computing Suite.

### **Expressive Arts & Design**

- We aim to provide a stimulating environment where children's creativity and original ideas are valued. We encourage children to express themselves through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play in a range of contexts. Children are encouraged to explore and experiment with a wide range of resources in order that they may develop confidence in their own ideas and abilities. Children take part in our school FAB projects.

### **Outdoor Learning**

- In the outdoor learning environment a range of activities are provided to support children's learning across all areas of the curriculum. Nursery and Reception children have access to separate outdoor areas. As the Reception classes have a smaller outdoor area, they have opportunities for larger physical activity in the KS1 playground at set times during the morning and afternoon. The outdoor environment allows for children to learn by working on a larger, more active scale, and provides for a wide range of different experiences.
- Children take part in Forest School sessions led by two members of school staff with Forest School qualifications. These are weekly, and the children take part on a rota basis.

### **Planning**

- Long term planning is undertaken by Nursery and Reception teachers together, taking account of each cohort's interests and experiences.
- Medium term planning is currently based on half termly topics, although in shorter terms topics may be planned for a term, with a different focus and emphasis in each half term. Planning is based on the seven Areas of Learning in the EYFS and linked to the 'Development Matters' document. Teachers also make links in their medium term planning to 'Rights Respecting School' concepts.
- Short term planning is done on a weekly basis. There is a balance of adult initiated focused activities and provision to support independent learning. Staff also endeavour to incorporate children's current interests and fascinations into the weekly provision, and ask for pupil suggestions for activities in the upcoming week. Staff use their ongoing assessments and observations to inform subsequent planning.

### **Assessment**

- In the term prior to a child starting in Nursery or Reception, parents are given a 'My Unique Child' booklet to complete. This provides an opportunity for parents to share valuable information and insights on their children's interests and learning. The booklets are brought back to school when the child starts in their new class.
- Parents also have the opportunity to share information on their children's achievements and interests through the completion of 'wow' cards, and through contributing to their child's 'learning journey' record when they are a 'focus child'.
- Assessment opportunities are planned as part of teaching and learning.
- Reception staff complete the Early Excellence baseline assessments within the children's first 6 weeks in school, and Nursery staff complete on entry assessments in the prime areas within the same time frame. Termly assessments are then recorded for each child in each of the 17 aspects of learning in both Nursery and Reception.
- Samples of children's work showing significant steps in learning are kept in A3 portfolios. These are available at all times for children and adults to share. Parents and children are encouraged to add comments on post it notes to these portfolios.
- Each week, a group of children in each class are targeted for focused observations. The progress of these children is discussed at weekly meetings where next steps are agreed. Observations of child-initiated activities are carried out on a planned, regular basis both inside and outdoors. Observations are also carried out during focused group work/whole class teaching in order to

assess children's level of understanding related to specific skills and concepts. In addition, incidental observations are made of child-initiated activities. Digital cameras and ipads are used to record children's work in a wide range of areas. All observations, assessments and recording are an integral part of teaching, as they inform future planning for children's needs.

- Information is exchanged with parents in a variety of ways, including Nursery home visits; induction meetings with the headteacher; settling meetings; regular Parent Consultation Evenings and through informal day to day contact.
- At the end of the child's time in Nursery, a report is written for parents based on the seven Areas of Learning and 'Characteristics of Effective Learning'. At the end of Reception parents receive a similar report, commenting on 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' as in Nursery, and with information on their child's attainment in relation to the 17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs).

### Monitoring

- The Assistant Head / EYFS Phase Leader, alongside other members of the Senior Leadership Team, is responsible for the monitoring of children's attainment and progress in the EYFS.
- There are opportunities for in school moderation of teachers' assessment judgements at least termly, supported by termly local authority early years assessment cluster meetings, and additional meetings organised by another local school learning cluster to which we belong. Reception staff also attend the annual central moderation training provided by the local authority.
- Teachers in the EYFS are observed termly - once with a Literacy focus, once with a Mathematical focus and with a varying focus for the third observation – in line with staff in other school phases. Those observing can include any member of SLT, invited governors, and our Camden Professional Partner from the local authority. Support staff observations are also carried out. When observing, we take into account the guidance on 'teaching' in early years from the 'Early Years Ofsted Inspection Handbook'. (Appendix A)
- The children's welfare, attainment data and progress are discussed by SLT and class teachers in Pupil Progress Review (PPR) meetings four times per year.
- A sample selection of the children's portfolios from each of the EYFS classes is monitored on a termly basis by the EYFS Phase Leader. Moderation meetings are held each term. Teacher assessments are made each term, and collated by the Phase Leader. These provide an overview across all EYFS classes and assist with the moderation process.

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Assistant Head / EYFS Phase Leader

January 2016

Date of Review:

### Appendices:

A: Definition of 'teaching' from the Early Years Ofsted Inspection Handbook (August 2015)

B: Safeguarding (EY appendix)

C: Intimate Care Policy

### Appendix A – from Early Years Ofsted Inspection Handbook

'Teaching should not be taken to imply a 'top down' or formal way of working. It is a broad term that covers the many different ways in which adults help young children learn. It includes their interactions with children during planned and child initiated play and activities: communicating and modelling language, showing, explaining, demonstrating, exploring ideas, encouraging, questioning,

recalling, providing a narrative for what they are doing, facilitating and setting challenges. It takes account of the equipment adults provide and the attention given to the physical environment, as well as the structure and routines of the day that establish expectations. Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children's next steps in learning and monitor their progress.'

*(Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE 2014)*