



## **Early Years Foundation Stage Policy**

(Updated January 2017)

### **Aims**

In the EYFS, we teach by building on what our children already know and can do. We recognise that every child is different and ensure that no child is excluded or disadvantaged. We offer a structure for learning that matches the needs of young children, providing opportunities for learning both inside and outside. We aim to create a motivating environment where children can learn both independently and with adult support. Through observing, working with and knowing our children, we can create a learning environment that they find safe, stimulating and exciting.

### **Teaching**

We believe in the education of the whole child and activities are all planned and linked to develop the Prime and Specific areas of the EYFS.

The Prime areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, as well as for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. The Specific areas are underpinned by the Prime areas and the children's development in the crucial Prime areas form the starting point when activities are planned for the children.

It is expected that the balance will shift towards a more equal focus on all the areas of learning as the children grow in confidence and ability within the three Prime areas.

### **The characteristics of learning**

We firmly believe that 'happy children learn' and that young children need to learn through planned and purposeful activities with a split between adult directed and child initiated activities. The 3 main characteristics of play – playing and exploring, active learning and creative and critical thinking - are considered when planning and we ensure a variety of these are provided each week in all areas.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

In the EYFS, we work on developing children's Personal, Social and Emotional wellbeing by promoting an inclusive, caring ethos where every child feels they are a valued member of the class. We work on developing attention skills, collaboration and persistence, as well as how to be part of a group and respect others' feelings. We also enable pupils to develop appropriate social skills and learn how to manage feelings. We want every child to leave the EYFS with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.

## Communication and Language

We provide many opportunities for children to talk and to listen. We encourage children to extend their range of vocabulary in an environment which is rich in language, and to develop good communication skills. We help children to develop their confidence and skills when expressing themselves and ensure they have the skills to listen and speak in a range of situations.

## Physical Development

All children have the opportunity to develop gross motor skills through weekly Games and PE lessons, as well as during daily outside playtimes. We also provide activities in class to support fine motor skills. Children should have a good understanding of how their bodies work and what they need to do to be healthy. We encourage the children to become independent when taking care of their own hygiene, for example washing hands after toileting and blowing their own nose.

## Literacy

Through the use of the 'Jolly Phonics' scheme, we teach children the links between letters and their sounds. We encourage the children to love reading and, through the class library and weekly visits to the school library, the children are exposed to a wide range of books both fiction and non-fiction. In Reception, children take a 'reading book' home each night, which has been carefully matched to their level of development. We aim to build children's confidence in writing through a variety of mark making activities, an area specifically aimed at writing and encouraging the children to 'write' for a variety of purposes.

## Mathematics

We provide opportunities for children to develop their understanding of number, counting, pattern, measurement and shape and space through a variety of practical activities. We aim to apply maths where possible to real life contexts.

## Understanding the World

We offer opportunities for children to make sense of their physical world and their community through topic work which provides children with the chance to find out about people, places and communities. Children have regular access to ICT to develop their understanding of technology. We provide children with the opportunity to solve problems, make decisions, predict, plan and question in a variety of contexts. We also encourage children to explore and find out about their environment, people and places. In both Reception and Squirrels, children have specialist French lessons where they learn to speak French, as well as about life in France. Children have weekly Forest School sessions which help them to explore and learn in different surroundings.

## Expressive arts and design

Children explore and share thoughts, feelings and ideas through a variety of art, music, movement, dance, design and technology, and imaginative role-play. Children have specialist music lessons each week, in Reception twice a week and Squirrels once a week.

## **Structure of the day**

### **Reception**

Maths and Literacy should be taught as a whole class session at least four days a week. Spelling should be taught through Jolly Phonics until February and then is generally followed by Letters and Sounds and a key word focus. Two or three sounds should be learned each week, depending on the ability of the children and the complexity of the phonemes. Children should take part in a guided writing or maths activity once a week with their teacher and a fun and active phonics and maths activity with their Teaching Assistant. Independent activities are also planned which allow the children to make sense of, and apply what they have learnt. Creative activities are ongoing and are led by Teaching Assistants. There is a continuous provision plan which sets out the activities and resources the children will be provided with in each area of the department.

Children should take home a reading book when the teacher feels they are ready, which normally occurs before Christmas. Children should take part in either individual reading with the teacher or TA about three times a week. When the teacher feels the children are ready, they will introduce guided group reading. This is aimed at teaching the children to understand their stories. This session will be counted as one of the children's individual reading sessions.

*Please see the whole school English and Guided Reading policy for more detail.*

In the afternoons, the teacher should model skills or teach a short session using UW/EAD/PSE as a focus.

The balance between CIA and teacher directed activities will gradually change as the year progresses, towards more teacher led learning, to help the children prepare for Year 1. The outside area should be available to be used when appropriate, with wellington boots and coats worn in winter.

### **Squirrels**

Work is planned using a continuous provision plan. Each week carefully planned activities are matched to the children's next steps, as identified through observations. The adults in the Nursery plan and offer adult led activities, or they may support child initiated play. Adult led activities may be offered on more than one occasion to ensure that the majority of the children can access them.

In the latter half of the year, the children will be introduced to the sounds of the alphabet through Jolly Phonics at a rate of one per week. This will involve a short story on one day and a look at the corresponding letter and an appropriate rhyme on another.

The children will mostly be free to choose between the activities planned by the adult, framed by an adult and other play resources, although as the year progresses more encouragement will be given to take part in the adult initiated activities.

### **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is essential for all aspects of a child's development. Through playing outdoors, children can engage in experiences that will enable them to develop in all areas of the curriculum, this can also have a positive impact on their well-being. Outdoor learning encompasses all that children see, do, hear or feel in the environment. This includes activities which are planned for, the spontaneous activities the children initiate and the naturally cyclical opportunities linked to the seasons, weather and nature.

As well as daily access to the outdoor play area and playground, children will have regular access to the woodlands through 'Forest Fun' sessions and Forest Friday. Both Squirrels and Reception children have free flow access to their outside courtyard/garden.

### **Classroom layout**

Activities should be set out on different levels (floor, tables, wall). Variety of activities suitable for different ages/maturity. Paint and play dough should be fresh. Resources should be labelled with words and pictures. A child's work may also be labelled with their name or a photograph. Lists of key workers should be displayed. Other cultures/abilities should be represented (dolls, photographs, books, writing in other languages/Braille). A visual timetable should be displayed. Children should have free access to drinking water. Children should be in a smoke-free environment at all times.

### **Planning**

Teachers should take the statements from Development Matters to create learning intentions for planned activities. Teachers should use observations and knowledge of their children to inform planning. Topics may be chosen at the beginning of a half term according to the children's interests and a loose overview should be completed with the teacher's ideas. These ideas should evolve according to the children's interests and ideas. Following observations from the previous week's planning should indicate the initials of children who have informed activities, either according to their needs or their interests. TAs should be involved in planning sessions.

### **Assessment**

Staff will assess and monitor the children as they work at the different activities. These assessment for learning observations will inform the staff's planning and form

a basis for the following activities, either that day, the following day or the following week.

Teachers will make observations of children during activities which demonstrate their level of development and interests. These observations may take the form of formal assessments, photos, WOWs from home or speech bubbles. These observations and the teachers' knowledge of each child will inform the teachers as they complete a summary of the children's progress three times a year. Starting with a base-line assessment at the end of September/beginning of October and then every four months from there. These assessments will make a 'best fit' judgement of the children's level of attainment and state what they can do, and will include next steps to continue each child's development. Staff will also complete a cohort overview of children in their class. They will use this data to look at how they can change their provision to meet the needs of all the children and help them continue to develop.

Reception children's assessed levels are sent to BANES in June to form part of their EYFSP cohort assessment. Prior to this, Reception staff attend moderation workshops. During 'handover' at the end of the school year, Year 1 teachers should be given a copy of each child's EYFSP scores, as well as a summary of their characteristics of effective learning.

*See also the whole school Assessment Policy.*

### **Learning Diaries**

We put photos, audio clips and videos of children's learning on their interactive learning diary (provided by ILD). Parents can access this and also add their own photos or videos of their child's development at home. Parents will be given log on information, including a unique password, as well as details of how they can add information to their child's diary.

In addition, children can also keep their own 'special book' of work they are proud of in the classroom. This will provide evidence of their continued development in all areas.

### **Key Workers**

Each child should be assigned a key worker/family leader who will ensure the children settle into school and is the first contact for parents. In Squirrels, the parents will be informed of their key worker on their child's first day. Their key person will ensure they greet the parents and develop a good working relationship with them based on mutual trust and respect.

In Reception, the key worker will be the class teacher, due to the ratios being relatively small.

### **Behaviour**

At school, we will encourage children's inquisitive nature and hope to inspire their curiosity and desire to learn. We will allow children to take risks and provide a safe

environment which encourages risk taking, discovery and development through trial and error within their exploration.

Children should be treated at all times with respect and understanding. Staff should adopt a firm but fair approach to behaviour, ensuring they are consistent with all children. If a child hurts another child, they should be removed from the situation and an explanation should be given to the child about why they have been removed. The child should then be talked to and helped to think about other ways they could have responded, rather than physically.

If a member of staff has a concern about a child's behaviour, they should first approach the child's key worker and also Head of Pre-Prep, Sarah James. The child's key worker will decide appropriate action and, if necessary, approach the parent and discuss how they can adopt a home/school approach. Our SENCo may be involved and a Support Profile may be written when there are ongoing concerns with a child's behaviour.

Our ultimate aim is that we work in partnership with parents to lay foundations from which children will grow into happy, self-confident and well-adjusted individuals.

*Refer to the whole school Behaviour Policy for more information.*

### **SEND provision**

If staff have concerns about the development of any child, they should discuss it sensitively with the parents. The SENCo, Katie Mason, should be aware and involved with all children who we feel are not meeting their expected developmental markers. A Support Profile may be developed for children with specific needs, this will be drawn up in partnership with the child's parents, school and any outside agencies.

*See also whole school SEND policy for more information*

### **Equal Opportunities**

We will take all reasonable steps to promote and practise equal opportunities. Children will be encouraged to develop a positive attitude towards people of different ethnic groups, cultures, beliefs and abilities.

Within the Early Years, we use observations of children's current learning and development to inform our planning of activities. We acknowledge and value where each child is in their development and provide opportunities and experiences to extend their knowledge and development. Activities are differentiated depending on the children's individual needs, ensuring that all children are able to access fully all areas of the curriculum. We strive to give all the children the opportunity to succeed and reach their potential by:

- Helping the children to feel safe and secure
- Acknowledging and praising all children's contribution
- Helping children to appreciate the differences they see in others
- Planning appropriate, differentiated play opportunities for all children

- Observing, assessing and planning for children's needs

*See also Prior Park Schools' Equal Opportunities Policy.*

### **Safeguarding and Welfare requirements**

At The Paragon School a designated member of staff co-ordinates child protection procedures and liaises with the DSL. If any staff have concerns about a child they should discuss it with Mrs Sarah James (Head of Pre-Prep and deputy DSL), who will liaise with David Barratt (DSL).

Within the Early Years, we will empower the children so that they can protect themselves. We will actively promote messages to children about their personal safety and protection. Children will be given an opportunity to:

- discuss a number of elements including personal safety
- label body parts
- discuss stranger danger
- understand that an adult is always ready to listen
- learn how to express feelings appropriately
- learn that they have a right to privacy
- learn what to do if you get lost
- understand what are 'good' or 'bad' secrets

All staff are responsible for ensuring the toys and equipment in their areas are safe and clean for use. If any equipment/furniture is not suitable for the children to play with, the maintenance team should be informed immediately and the area should be made out of bounds to the children.

Reception children sit as a class/group in the dining room and their teacher and TA will also sit with them to encourage and model good eating habits. Squirrels children sit as a class with two adults to look after their needs during lunchtimes. Teachers are responsible for making sure each child has a balanced meal. Parents may inform a member of staff if they wish their child to be given a hot meal every day or if they want them to choose. Children are always encouraged to have a hot meal or a selection of food from the hot and cold counters. In the case of two or more children being affected by food poisoning, Ofsted should be contacted immediately.

Children in Squirrels and Reception should have free access to clean drinking water throughout the day and they should be encouraged to help themselves if they are thirsty.

On trips, ratios of adults to children must be at least 1:4 and this should be stated in the risk assessment. For some activities, the teacher may feel more adults are necessary. Teachers should take parental phone numbers, a first aid kit, a mobile and necessary medication on any trip. At least one named paediatric first aider should also accompany the trip. If the group will split up into sub groups on a trip, then there should be enough paediatric first aiders and medical bags to accompany each group.

Any risk should be assessed by the teacher before embarking on any new/different activity. If necessary, a risk assessment should be drawn up and distributed to all staff involved before the activity and also saved on the ‘shared area’.

Accident forms are completed after every incident/accident. These clearly state the name of the child, how the accident occurred, action taken and any treatment received. It is signed by the member of staff who dealt with the accident and wrote up the report. Upon collection of the child, the form is then discussed with the parents and they countersign it before the sheet is handed to reception to keep on file.

All parent volunteers helping in class frequently (more than three times a month) must have had a full DBS check carried out by the school and should undergo the full recruitment process.

Staff in the EYFS, should complete an enhanced disclosure to prove they are not disqualified by association and are suitable to work with the children.

Children should be taught to keep safe. Routines such as hand washing and nose blowing should be taught by each class teacher to ensure good hygiene. A child’s parent will be contacted immediately if a child is unwell.

*Please refer to Prior Park Schools policies and Staff Handbook for whole school procedures for Health and Safety, Child Protection and Risk Assessment.*

### **Taking photos or videos**

Staff should never use their own personal phones, cameras or video recorders to take images of the children. All staff should use the devices provided by The Paragon School. Any images of children should not be removed from school, or posted on the internet. Staff should ensure that all personal mobile telephones are in the staff room during the school day.

### **Collection of children**

Parents should inform the school, either in writing (whiteboards in classroom, notes or email) or verbally (phone call or discussion with teacher) if any person other than the parent will be collecting their child. Staff will not allow any child to go home with someone other than their parent unless we have been informed. Parents should collect children from the classroom only and not from the playground.

*See also Missing child and uncollected child policy.*

### **Staffing**

There should be at least two members of staff working with children in EYFS at any time. Ratios of adults to children in the mornings in Squirrels are for teacher with QTS 1:13 and other staff with relevant qualifications 1:8. For a leader without QTS, but relevant NVQ3 or higher, the ratio will be 1:8, with other staff all having relevant qualifications. In Reception, each class will have a teacher with QTS and a TA with a relevant qualification.

All children can attend the wrap around care provided by ‘Super Pirates’. Super Pirates ensures its staff and ratios meet legal requirements.

When working with children, staff should not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for the children. Practitioners taking medication which they believe may affect their ability to care for the children should seek medical advice before working directly with the children.

All new staff members receive a full and relevant induction procedure, including safeguarding and welfare, staff code of conduct and what to do in an emergency with either the Deputy Head or Head of Pre-Prep. Further, ongoing induction, is continued by; in the case of teaching assistants, with the class teacher, or for teaching staff the Head of Pre-Prep or other member of SLT.

*See also whole school policy for Recruitment and Induction procedures.*

### **Supervision of children throughout the day**

Whilst in the classroom, all children in the EYFS should have sufficient adults, as per the staffing requirements. There should always be at least two adults in Squirrels with the children at any one time, irrespective of the number of children.

If, during the day, the children have free flow access to any other areas, there should always be one member of staff in each area and also staff should be aware of the need to watch and support movement from one area to another.

EYFS children will go out to playtime with the rest of the Pre-Prep. This allows them to mix with their elder siblings and make friends across the age groups. Children in Squirrels will all wear a high visibility jacket to make them easily identifiable for all staff. There is an orange jacket for any child who needs to be carefully watched for any reason. There will always be at least one member of staff from the EYFS out during any playtime, with at least three other members of staff from the Pre-Prep. During the lunchtime break, four members of staff will again be on duty, but one member of staff will be responsible for opening the Reception courtyard and providing toys and games which the children can join in with quietly.

During lunchtime Squirrels children will all sit together in the lunch hall and can serve themselves a selection of food to eat for lunch from the platters on the table. They will be supported by a member of the Squirrels team and also one other teacher. The children are encouraged to have a hot meal, followed by a pudding and fruit. Bread and butter is also on offer and they can choose either milk or water to drink. In Reception, the children collect their lunches from the hatch. Children are encouraged to have a hot meal, but are welcome to choose something from the cold counter or a mixture of hot and cold depending on their personal likes or dislikes. They then sit at a table already laid with place settings and cups. The Reception staff will eat with their classes and help them cut up their food as well as modelling good eating habits. Staff will ensure their children have all had sufficient to eat before going to choose their pudding. The children will also be able to choose water or milk to drink.

## **Staff training**

All EYFS staff should attend local BANES courses at least once a year. If any member of staff would like to improve a particular aspect of their practice, the Head of Pre-Prep will find a suitable course, or a course will be agreed during supervision.

All staff are invited to whole school CPD opportunities and these often happen at the start of each term as well as occasional twilight sessions. Staff also have the opportunity to complete a basic or paediatric first aid training arranged by the school.

## **Supervision for staff**

All staff in the EYFS are offered Supervision with a trained supervisor. These sessions will be offered three times a year and give the staff an opportunity to discuss their work, what has gone well, and any problems they may have encountered. They will provide the opportunity to talk confidentially about their role. If staff would like their sessions with another member of SLT, David Barrett has also undergone the training and would be available to hold their supervision meetings.

*See EYFS Supervision Policy for more details.*

## **Relationships with parents**

Parents are considered key in the child's learning and development and should be supported by the teacher to help their children at home. We value parents as children's first educator and welcome a parent's guidance and knowledge as they know their child best.

Before their child starts school ask them to complete a form telling us about their child's likes, dislikes and what they can do at home. Staff are easily contactable by parents either at drop off, pick up or through email.

A parent should be phoned by the child's class teacher (or the Receptionist) the same morning if a child is greatly distressed during drop off.

Parents should be invited into the classroom regularly to share their children's special books and work.

Transition meetings are offered to all parents during their child's first few weeks in Reception. During these meetings the parents are encouraged to talk about their child's previous setting and experiences and what they enjoy.

Reception parents are offered a 'Curriculum Meeting' during the first few weeks of term. During this meeting staff talk about their child's life in school, how they learn, helpful tips on learning Jolly Phonics and Maths at home, and also answer any queries parents may have.

Parents of EYFS children are invited to an EYFS Parents' Evening in June/July. This gives them the opportunity to meet other parents, talk to the staff their child will have and also listen to a short presentation about life in the Early Years.

Parents are invited to termly Parents' Evenings where they can discuss their child's progress in detail with their class teacher.