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Staff Responsibility:	Louise Dunn
Linked policies:	Safeguarding Health and Safety Behaviour Intimate care Equal opportunities
Singed by chair:	
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Boarshaw Community Primary School

Early Years Policy

Introduction

'High-quality early years education, with a strong focus on communication, is good for every child. It is especially positive for disadvantaged children...Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. If children are at risk of falling behind the majority, the best time to help them to catch up and keep up is in the early years. Every child can make progress, if they are given the right support. When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow.'

Development Matters Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage
(Revised July 2021)

The Early Years Foundation Stage applies to children from birth to the end of their Reception Year. At Boarshaw Primary School we have Nursery and Reception provision. We have one class of Nursery and two classes of Reception. Nursery children join the school in the September following their third birthday. Reception children join the school in the September following their fourth birthday. We believe that early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives and at Boarshaw Primary School we greatly value the importance that the EYFS plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development.

General Aims

At Boarshaw Primary School we aim to support all children to become independent and collaborative learners. Across the Foundation Stage, we will provide a broad and balanced curriculum that enables each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential.

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 next steps and helping each child to progress. We will use a variety of assessment methods including interactions, focus tasks, observations and more formalised activities.
- Develop positive 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;
- 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 and the benefits of sharing both successes and concerns with them.

Learning and Developing

Our curriculum for the Foundation Stage reflects the learning aims and objectives set out in the [Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\)](#). The curriculum is guided by research around child development and the principles and practices in [Development Matters 2020](#). Our curriculum for Early Years focuses on progressive skills and provides a range of enriching activities.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape educational provision in all early years' settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and none can be delivered in isolation from the others. Communication and language is a key thread that runs through our whole curriculum as this underpins attainment in all areas. Staff place the communication and language

of all pupils at the forefront of all activities and interactions. Our children's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across all areas of learning. They require a balance of adult led and child initiated activities in order for children to develop effectively and to give them the best chance of obtaining a good level of development at the end of their Reception Year.

Three areas of learning are 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
- Physical Development

Staff will also support children in four specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied.

Specific Areas:

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

Children's development levels are assessed and as the Reception 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. However, if a child's Early Years Foundation Stage progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, staff will discuss this with the child's parents/carers and agree how to support the child.

Alongside the prime and specific areas of learning we ensure that our environment and delivery of the curriculum incorporates the three characteristics of effective teaching and learning:

- Playing and exploring - children will have opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning - children will have time and space to concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy their achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - we encourage and support children to have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

Planning

Our Early Years Foundation Stage setting follows the curriculum as outlined in the latest version of the EYFS statutory framework. The planning objectives within the Foundation Stage have been developed using Development Matters 2020. The planning is based upon themes with discrete phonics, maths, English and other directed teaching. Topics that have been identified as vehicles of interest enable us to deliver the children's next steps in learning whilst also responding to their social and emotional needs. Teachers will plan a range of focus activities and provide enhancements within the learning environment to ensure appropriate challenge during child initiated learning. Staff also take into account the individual needs, interests and stage of development of each child and use this information to plan challenging and enjoyable experiences.

Teaching

Teaching in Foundation Stage is not always a 'top down' formal way of working, teaching happens in a range of different situations and in a variety of different ways. There are many different ways in which staff in Foundation Stage support the children to learn. This can be through: high quality interactions with pupils during planned or child initiated activities; adult led focus sessions; whole class taught sessions. In all aspects of teaching in Foundation Stage staff continually model language focusing on good communication and interaction skills. Staff use effective questioning during adult directed and child initiated learning to deepen pupils thinking and understanding. Staff provide a narrative for pupils play and facilitate learning through setting challenges and enhancing the learning environment.

In our Foundation Stage each area of learning and development is implemented through planned activities, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child initiated activities. Staff respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interactions.

As children grow older, and as their development allows, the balance gradually shifts towards more adult-led activities to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities

Our whole school ethos, as well as that of the foundation stage, embraces inclusion. We recognise and respect the abilities and strengths of our children at all levels of development and the wealth of knowledge and experience that they bring from their differing backgrounds and cultures.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We do this by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning and we set realistic and challenging expectations that meet the needs of individual children, so that children are able to reach their full potential. We achieve this by

planning to meet the needs of boys and girls, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children of different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds. We aim to 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

We provide: a wide range of opportunities to motivate and support children and to help them to learn effectively; a safe and supportive learning environment in which the contribution of all children is valued; resources which reflect diversity and are free from discrimination and stereotyping; challenging activities for all children and for those whose ability and understanding are advanced. We will monitor children's progress and take action to provide support as necessary. Where a specific need is suspected we will liaise with the Special Educational Needs co-ordinator and seek advice from outside agencies, such as the speech and language service, the educational psychologist and the bi-lingual support services amongst others. We adhere to the Equal Opportunity and Inclusion policies of the school.

Early Years Pupil Premium – we will endeavour to identify our least advantaged pupils and inform parents or carers of their opportunity to apply for their child's entitlement to extra funding in school. All extra funding we receive will be used to support areas in which we identify that the child will best benefit. We will track children's progress to ensure that they are making good progress and to ensure that support is adjusted to target specific areas as the child develops.

Assessment

At Boarshaw Primary School, ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development processes. Staff observe pupils to identify their level of achievement, interests and learning styles. These observations are used to shape future planning. Staff also take into account observations from and discussions with parents and/or carers.

Within the first six weeks that a child starts in reception, staff will administer the statutory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA). Alongside this statutory assessment teachers will assess the ability of each child using observations and activities. 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. This on entry assessment also takes into account any other records we receive from previous pre-school settings, parents and childminders.

At Boarshaw we follow the Rocket Phonics scheme and children complete a half termly phonics assessment. These assessments help teachers identify children not making expected progress, allowing for appropriate grouping and timely interventions. These interventions enable teachers to support children to catch up and prevent them from falling further behind. This is used alongside ongoing

assessment in daily observations in lessons and throughout the day to build a clear and accurate picture of children's attainment and next steps in phonics.

Through observations, interactions, focus activities, staff discussions and parental contributions teachers continually assesses pupils attainment and plan for their next steps. Each term staff record each child's level of development against the seven areas of learning. We record each child's level of development as working below expected, developing and working at expected. Observations and assessment of each individual pupil is on-going with the information gained being used to ensure that future planning reflects identified needs.

At the end of Foundation Stage staff complete the EYFS profile for each child, Pupils are assessed against the 17 early learning goals indicating whether they are:

- Meeting expected levels of development
- Not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging')

The profile reflects ongoing observations, discussions with staff, parents and /or carers. The results of the profile are shared with parents and/or carers for their child and EYFS profile data is submitted to the local authority during the summer term. The profile is moderated internally (referring to the EYFS Statutory guidance, Development Matters and exemplification materials) and in partnership with other local schools, to ensure consistent assessment judgements.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage takes the form of both formal and informal observations, teacher and teacher assistant knowledge of the pupils and photographic evidence. Assessment is completed regularly and involves both the teachers and other adults, as appropriate. Evidence that supports teachers judgements are recorded in pupils individual learning journey files and online learning journal. During the foundation stage we gather a wide range of evidence that we share with parents at each parental consultation meeting. Parents also have direct access to the online learning journeys via the Tapestry app.

At the end of the academic year, Foundation Stage parents receive a written report that offers comments on each child's progress and attainment across the curriculum. It highlights the child's strengths and developmental needs, and gives details of the child's general progress. We complete these in the summer term and send them to parents before the end of the school year.

Learning Environment

Our Reception areas are organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are specific areas where the children can be active, be quiet, be creative etc. Children have access to both the inside and the outside environment at various points in the day which is known to have a positive effect on the children's development. The Early Years Foundation Stage pupils have their own outdoor area with sand, water, climbing equipment, bikes, gross and fine motor opportunities, mud kitchen, construction and role play. Spending time outdoors offers opportunities for

exploring and learning things differently to when pupils are indoors and gives things a different perspective. The children can explore, use their senses and be physically active and exuberant. All areas of the curriculum can be explored outside. Enhancements will be added to some areas of learning each week to support children's next steps and provide a stimulating learning environment.

Transition

Starting school can be a difficult time for young children; 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. In Reception and Nursery, children are invited to a taster session before their official start date. Staff are on hand to meet and greet parents with their children and answer any questions they might have. 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 teachers and other key staff. We also offer home visits by the teacher if we feel this would be beneficial. These provide the opportunity to learn more about the Nursery and Reception curriculum. This is also an opportunity for staff to:

- To go through the school handbook
- Explain about uniform, PE kit and school dinners/ free school meals
- Explain about holidays and absences
- Answer any questions parents might have about starting school
- Explain the arrangements for starting school in September
- Talk to the parents about the school and Government expectations at the end of the EYFS.

We also try to visit any settings that are sending children to us. When children join the school in September, we find that it is best for all children to start in the same week. We encourage parents to bring their children for full days from day one. Throughout the Reception year, each child's involvement in whole school life will have been built upon. They will have taken part in assemblies as well as sharing lunchtimes with the other children.

Safe Guarding and Welfare

At Boarshaw Primary School, we understand that we are legally required to comply with welfare requirements as stated in the Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021.

- To provide a setting that is welcoming, safe and stimulating where children can grow in confidence;

- Promote good health through teaching pupils about healthy lifestyles including healthy food choices, how they care for their bodies with an emphasis on oral hygiene and looking after their mental health with a specific focus on appropriate screen time;
- Manage behaviour effectively in a manner appropriate for the children's stage of development and individual needs;
- To 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;
- Maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe efficient management of the setting and to meet the needs of the children.

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. (More information can be found in the school's safeguarding policy)

Intimate care

Intimate care is any care which involves washing, touching or carrying out an invasive procedure that most children are able to carry out themselves. However, depending on a child's age and stage of development, they may need some support, for example dressing, wiping their bottom after using the toilet and changing underwear following an accident. We actively encourage parents to start helping their children become independent with these tasks before they start school. Every child has the right to privacy, dignity and a professional approach from all staff when meeting their needs and it is important that staff and parents work in partnership to give the right support to an individual child.

Children who have extra needs with regard to toileting are identified and their parents/Carers are asked to meet and sign a form enabling us to help them with toileting needs. School staff follow the intimate care policy.

Snack and Mealtimes

We follow the EYFS statutory framework to make sure mealtimes are safe, healthy and meet individual needs. Children are offered nutritious food and drink and have access to water at all times. We take into account allergies and cultural needs. All dietary information is recorded and followed carefully. Mealtimes are treated as social learning opportunities and children are encouraged to be independent, make healthy

choices and use good manners. Children are always supervised while eating and food is cut appropriately to reduce choking risks, as expected in the EYFS guidance.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy is regularly reviewed to stay in line with the EYFS requirements and good practice.