



Gagle Brook Primary and Nursery School

Early Years Policy



Early Years Curriculum Intent

At Gagle Brook Primary & Nursery School every child is recognised as a unique individual, and we acknowledge and promote children's interests to provide them with the opportunities to follow their imagination and creativity. We have 4 main streams to our curriculum intent:

Enquiring Minds – Our intent is to promote a love for learning through our enabling environment which provides a range of opportunities for hands on exploration, learning and play. We encourage children to participate in a variety of activities; some focused and adult-led, others open-ended and led by the child, as we inspire them to be active and independent learners. We believe this approach helps to build children's self-esteem and self-worth and increases independence and the ability to show initiative.

Knowledge and Skills - Through our topic and skills-based curriculum we strive to provide children with a wealth of opportunities to acquire more knowledge, to develop skills and to make progress in all areas of the curriculum.

Rich Vocabulary - Throughout their play we support children with their social interactions and introduce new language and vocabulary, developing children's confidence and oracy as these life skills are so important to ensure success through school and beyond.

One Planet Principles and Values - As an Eco-school we feel it is vital that we help our children to understand the vulnerabilities of our planet and how, if we all 'do our bit' and work together, we can make a real difference. Alongside this we also discuss values, such as 'responsibility' and 'determination' which help to develop positive attitudes and a sense of community.

We understand that children's welfare is paramount to ensure they can develop as young enthusiastic learners, so we work in close partnership with parents and carers throughout the year. We support them to see their vital role in their child's education and encourage them to support their learning so they can reach their full potential.

Our inclusive ethos promotes children's all-round development and fosters positive attitudes towards learning. Inviting children to develop positive values, attitudes and relationships is supported throughout the school through our Values based approach and our focus on the One Planet Principles.

Play and Active learning

At Gagle Brook, we believe play to be the means through which young children learn. It is through play that children have the opportunity to explore, investigate, question, develop and act out experiences, helping them make sense of the world. Play helps children build up ideas and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children investigate and solve problems through collaborative and individual play.

Our learning environment, including both the indoor classrooms and the outside area, provides a breadth of opportunities for both adult-led and child-initiated learning in all seven areas of learning and development, as laid out in the Educational Programmes section of the Statutory Framework 2021.

Active learning occurs when children are motivated and interested. Children need to have some independence and control over their learning. As children develop their confidence, they learn to make decisions. It provides children with a sense of satisfaction as they take ownership of their learning.

Planning

Celebrating the joy of books and reading is at the heart of our curriculum. In line with the rest of the school, we have a topic related 'Big Question' for each term, such as 'What makes us unique?' linked to PSED and 'What is between the pages?' linked to Literacy. Each week our planning is then focused on a high-quality text, which supports the discussion and topic related learning, along with links to children's interests and next steps.

We teach carefully planned and sequenced knowledge and skills throughout the year to ensure every child is given a variety of different opportunities and stimuli. We also aim to link skills-based learning to the child's own interests as this helps to keep the children engaged and allows them to take ownership of their learning.

We offer the children a broad and balanced curriculum which follows The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. This is planned for and delivered using 'Early Years Educational Programmes' as stated in the Statutory Framework 2021, 'Birth to 5 Matters' and 'Development Matters 2020'. This enables the nursery and reception teachers to incorporate the seven areas of learning and development into a stimulating, creative, cross curricular approach, ensuring breadth.

The EYFS states four overarching principles which should shape practice. The document – Birth to 5 Matters shows how these themes, and the principles that inform them, work together for children in the Early Years.

They are:

- a unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environment and
- equal learning and development.

Development Matters 2020 also sets out Seven Key Features of Effective practice. These are:

1. **The best for every child** - all children deserve to have an equal chance of success
2. **High-quality care** - providing each and every child with the best possible care and experience should be central to any decisions made
3. **The curriculum: what we want children to learn** - the curriculum needs to be ambitious & child focused
4. **Pedagogy: helping children to learn** - staff will provide a range of learning opportunities, including play, modelling expectations along with direct teaching
5. **Assessment: checking what children have learnt** - staff must know their children well and must have a good understanding of child development
6. **Self-regulation and executive function** - supporting children to understand their emotions and regulate their behaviour
7. **Partnership with parents** - working closely with parents to ensure school and home can work together to support children through their early years will give them the best start

During their time in both nursery and Reception children will actively engage in learning across all 7 areas of the curriculum, which are all inter-connected, with a view to reaching the expectations laid out in the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Reception year. The goals are made up of the Three Prime Areas and Four Specific Areas of learning, there are 17 in total:

Prime Areas:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language

Specific Areas

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Expressive Arts and Design

Alongside the areas of learning and development are the characteristics of effective teaching and learning. These move through the 17 areas, they are:

- **Playing and exploring** – children investigate and experience things and ‘have a go’
- **Active learning** – children concentrate and keep on trying
- **Creating and thinking critically** – children develop their own ideas, strategies and make links

None of these areas can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend upon one another. These areas are explored through a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. The child-initiated opportunities are where we provide the chances for the children to be independent learners, they may use aspects that have been previously taught or modelled but during this time they are free to take the lead in their learning or play. The adult led activities are our opportunities to introduce and teach new skills. This is where children will work with an adult, normally as part of a small group.

Activities and role play opportunities inside and outdoors provide a means through which children can independently practise, apply and develop the skills and ideas with the support of the adults in the setting.

Phonics

At Gagle Brook, we recognise that phonics knowledge is key to reading and writing. We carry out discrete phonics sessions, linked to the Read Write Inc scheme. The children then apply their phonics skills each day in and around the environment. We practise speaking and listening throughout the day through sharing stories together, ‘Build a Story’ sessions, Wellcomm sessions, circle times and class discussions.

Assessment and observation

When children begin nursery and reception, the class teachers have transition meetings with the nursery staff and preschools. Along with this information and discussion, the teachers would ideally meet the children at home or remotely and during play dates (if not already seen at the start of nursery). If this is not possible they will hold phone conversations with parents, to gather information that goes towards their ‘Getting to know you’ assessment. We also use the RBA Baseline documentation to report at the beginning of the reception year. At the end

of the reception year, each child's level of development (ELG) is recorded against the seven areas of learning and development using a 'best fit model'.

Throughout the year the nursery and reception team carry out observations of children and record their progress on Tapestry. This along with pieces of work and creations the children have produced contribute to the child's Learning Journey. We also encourage parents to upload learning and observations from home.

Although adult led activities can offer insight into children's attainment by making sure the child has the opportunity to demonstrate and build upon their knowledge and skills, it is mostly evidence through observing and playing alongside children through their child initiated time and activities that are used as judgements to detail how each child is progressing.

The ongoing assessments of the children are collected and recorded into the children's Learning Journeys. They are then recorded onto our tracking system on Pupil Asset three times a year. In the final term we write a report to parents. Along with a personal comment, this will state their progress against the Early Learning Goals and the child's Characteristics of Effective Learning.

Moderation takes place within Gagle Brook Primary and Nursery School and across the WHF and schools within the local area to help guide our judgements and offer future ideas to support next steps.

The Learning Environment

At Gagle Brook we recognise the environment plays a vital role in supporting and extending the children's development. The nursery and reception classrooms, which incorporate the indoor and outdoor areas, are well organised to allow children to explore and learn securely and safely. There are areas where the children can be active and others where they can have quiet time.

The environments are set up into clear learning zones where children are able to find and locate resources and equipment independently. Our learning environment operates a free flow system whereby the children can choose which area of the environment they would like to explore. This is around the adult led activities that take place throughout the day at various times.

Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within the school and tolerate a no discrimination philosophy. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or ability. All children and families are valued within our school. We recognise that all pupils bring different experiences, interests and strengths which influence the way they learn and we encourage all children to succeed and do their best. We aim to give each child the opportunity to experience success in their learning and ensure equal opportunities will be extended to all pupils. We encourage children to make their own choices and to give reasons for decisions and actions. We recognise that children develop in individual ways and at varying rates. Children's attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others, therefore we praise and encourage as well as celebrate achievements that are made in school and at home.

Special Educational Needs

Those children which are recognised as having Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND) will follow similar programmes of study as their peers. However, the work, if necessary will be tailored to meet individual children's needs.

Safeguarding

Gagle Brook Primary and Nursery School takes seriously its responsibility to protect and safeguard the welfare of the children and young people in its care. "The welfare of the pupil/student is paramount." (Children Act 1989.) Our staff and Governors are committed to safeguarding the pupil/students at this school and contribute to multi-agency working to keep pupils and students safe.

Health and Safety

All safety measures are taken to ensure the safety of all children in the Early Years. Locks are installed on the gates and doors. We follow the TWHF 'Health and Safety' policy which all staff and students are familiar with and we have designated people responsible for first aid in school. Within the Early Years, we have members of staff who are currently trained in Paediatric First Aid. Children are taught the safe and appropriate use of equipment and materials. Children are taught to be mindful when moving around the school and are aware of safety issues. Our health and safety policy is available on our school website. All medicines are kept in a locked cupboard at the school office or in locked cabinet in the classroom if required and approved by parents/carers before administration of any medicines. No hazardous substances are used within the setting.

Working in partnership with Parents/Carers

We recognise that parents/carers are children's first and enduring educators and we value the contribution they make. We appreciate the role that parents have played and their future role in educating the children. We do this through:

- Talking to parents about their child before they start school and throughout their journey with us.
- Visiting children in their home setting prior to starting school in nursery or reception (when circumstances allow). The children also have the opportunity to come into school to spend time in the environment and get to know their teacher.
- Being invited to a transition morning or afternoon for a stay and play session in June/July before starting school.
- Inviting all parents to an induction meeting during the term before they start school.
- Offering parents regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress in the class before and after school sessions or any concerns either the teacher or parent may have.
- Inviting parents to end of term 'big question' parent events so they can celebrate their children's achievements alongside staff
- Setting parents up on Tapestry so they can contribute to the shared learning journey

The adults in the Early Years Team

We provide the children with a safe and secure environment. We aim to develop good relationships with all children interacting positively with them and taking time to listen. We also model and support children in forming positive relationships and friendships with one another. All members of staff have access to continued professional development to maintain and extend their specialist expertise.

Signed: Mrs L Whiskerd

Date: September 2022

Review Date: September 2024