



EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE POLICY

**QUEEN BOUDICA
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE (EYFS)

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.”

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012

INTRODUCTION

Our policy for ‘Early Years Foundation Stage’ helps ensure that the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), including the four principles, are delivered in full. The EYFS applies to children from birth until the end of the year in which they are five.

PHILOSOPHY

In the Reception classes the children are cared for, and provided with a stimulating and challenging environment to prepare and encourage them to be confident and active learners for life. We aim for children to be ‘school ready’ by the end of their time in the EYFS. We hope that children will develop into independent, caring and responsible citizens who are able to apply their skills and talents in a variety of adaptable ways. Our expectation is that every child is very much involved with their own learning: making decisions, asking questions and focusing on tasks.

ADMISSIONS, INDUCTION AND TRANSFER

We believe that for both the child and their family the first introduction to Queen Boudica Primary School should be as smooth and enjoyable as possible. The following strategies help us to fulfil this aim:

- Opportunities for informal visits prior to admission
- Close partnership with the Children’s Centre and opportunities to work together to provide school visits in the half term prior to admission
- Visits to children in pre-school settings (where possible)
- Part time attendance over the first few weeks
- Regular dialogue with parents and carers

At Queen Boudica Primary School, all children join us at the beginning of the school year in which they are five (one intake). We have two ‘parallel’ classes which have an equal combination of children in relation to gender and age. During the term before the children start, parents and carers are invited to a welcome meeting where they have the opportunity to meet the staff and find out more about the school. Children are also invited to visit on two occasions. School staff may also visit the pre-school settings in order to meet the children and gather information from practitioners, or at the very least phone parents and carers/pre-school settings. We work in partnership with the Children’s Centre based next door to invite targeted families to a series of informal sessions where children have the opportunity to meet school staff, and get to know the setting (with parents/carers present).

On entry to school, which is set by the Local Authority (Planning and Admissions) as the Autumn Term ie. the September after their 4th birthday, the children are inducted in a gradual way: part time, part time including lunch and finally full time. There is a flexible window of up to 4 weeks in which children can become full time. The routine of the school day is introduced slowly, especially those aspects which take the children away from their

classroom environment – for example PE and assemblies. (It should be noted that statutory school age for a child is the term after the child becomes five).

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS – WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We believe that parents and carers have a vital role in the education of their child. We welcome and value their input, particularly in the first few weeks of meeting their child. Before their child starts school they are sent a Welcome Pack which outlines important aspects of school life in order to help them prepare their child for school. The children also receive a newsletter from the current Reception class outlining activities to look forward to.

We offer flexible admission arrangements that enable children and parents to become secure in the school environment and routines. We arrange activities that support parental involvement throughout the year. These include invitations to curriculum meetings, the operation of a home/school contact diary, visits, walks and home learning tasks. We actively encourage parents/carers to participate in Forest School sessions, and to come in to help with daily classroom life. Our school newsletter also includes a regular dedicated 'EYFS corner' (emailed directly to parents and available online) which shares with families our activities and learning for the week past and future.

EYFS PRINCIPLES

Four guiding principles shape our practice in the Early Years at Queen Boudica:

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

At Queen Boudica Primary School, we ensure that these four commitments remain a main focus in all aspects of our provision.

There are seven areas of learning and development that shape our teaching and learning in the Early Years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, called the prime areas, are:

- communication and language;
- physical development; and
- personal, social and emotional development.

The remaining 4 areas of learning and developments are the specific areas, through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied. The specific areas are:

- literacy;
- mathematics;
- understanding the world; and
- expressive arts and design.

The experiences that our children meet enable them to develop a number of skills, competencies and concepts over all areas of learning. The seven areas cannot be delivered in isolation from one another; they are equally important and when taught in conjunction with one another, develop the child in a well rounded and all-inclusive manner. In each area the Early Learning Goals define the age-related expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The two Reception teachers work in partnership and deliver an equal curriculum to all children whilst still taking into account the strengths and interests of individual children within those classes. The outdoor environment is an essential aspect of the children's learning, with all children having access to this throughout the school day (over the year free-flow play is developed until fully integrated in the summer term). We also make use of our local amenities, visiting Highwoods Country Park regularly for learning activities throughout the year.

We also involve the children in various activities specifically designed to help develop their independence. After the first half term, children begin to participate in self-serve snack; they pour their own water, select their own fruit or vegetable, and mark that they have had snack by moving their registration tag. Children also participate in regularly independent cooking sessions whereby they follow pictorial instructions to make a recipe. The recipe is usually linked to the theme for the week and may involve an element of 'risk' (such as using a hand blender, grater or hot plate). An elected 'head chef' leads the group through the instructions, and self evaluation is complete upon tasting the finished product.

The EYFS curriculum is determined at the beginning of the school year, with opportunities for children to engage in planning activities along the way. Our carefully planned curriculum helps children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the EYFS with provision for children to take part in active, hands-on experiences both inside and outside the classroom. We encourage children to talk about their learning and develop independence and self-management. We value their suggestions, and take into account their interests, hence planning is flexible. We largely follow an objective-led planning approach, whereby a learning focus is determined (through prior assessments) and activities are devised to support children to master this objective through supported play. Children can be individually stretched or supported according to their own need and motivation is high as the activity develops from their interest. Our staff members work hard to develop and foster good relationships with all children, and have a good understanding of how children develop and learn, supporting them in this process.

Children have opportunities to work individually, in small groups and as a whole class, accessing learning through a range of teaching styles. 'Learning, Playing and Interacting: Good practice in the EYFS' promotes the following key points as being integral to effective learning:

- playing
- being with other people
- being active
- exploring new things and experiences
- talking to themselves
- communicating about what they are doing with someone who responds to their ideas
- representing ideas and experiences
- meeting physical and mental challenges
- being shown how to do things
- practising, repeating, applying skills
- having fun

Our curriculum and planning responds to these points and implements opportunities for children to access each of the above important strategies. The points noted here also link closely to those made in the school's Curriculum Policy as well as the Learning and Teaching Policy.

PLAY IN THE EYFS

Through play our children explore and develop learning experiences, which help them make sense of the world. They practise and build up ideas, and learn how to control themselves and understand the need for rules. Children are given the opportunities to explore and discover within a safe and supported environment. Play underpins the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

The children have the opportunity to think creatively alongside other children as well as on their own. They communicate with others as they investigate and solve problems. They express fears or re-live anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations. They also learn how to become more independent. The children are involved with both group and individual play, some initiated by adults, some by the children. They learn through being active learners working with a wide range of resources. Through play children will develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally. We give children the skills they need in order to take risks, make mistakes and find solutions.

Adults in the setting will support play by:

- Planning and resourcing a stimulating environment
- Supporting children's learning through planned play
- Extending and supporting children's spontaneous play
- Extending and developing children's language and communication in their play.
- Listening to all forms of children's communication and their ideas and taking these into account when developing play and planning.
- Narrating children's play
- Asking questions about children's play

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

This is an ongoing process used by all practitioners to monitor individual learning. Strategies to record evidence may be written or photographic and are then combined to complete an individual *Learning Journey* for each child. A range of stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to a child's Learning Journey – teachers, support assistants, parents/carers and children themselves. Appropriate records are forwarded to the next teacher; including a record of how the child learns best (characteristics of learning). If a child moves to another school, all records are sent and we make additional contact if necessary.

Formal assessments completed are made up of the Baseline assessment and the EYFSP. The Baseline assessment becomes statutory in September 2016, and aims to improve how the DfE measures primary schools' progress. At Queen Boudica we use the Baseline assessment to measure a child's starting point and identify areas for development and focus over the year. We regularly monitor progress and at the end of the year, an EYFS Profile is completed for each individual child.

The EYFS Profile summarises and describes children's attainment at the end of the EYFS. It is based on ongoing observation and assessment in the three prime and four specific

areas of learning, and the three learning characteristics (playing and exploring, active learning, creating and thinking critically). In order to determine whether a child is in line with age related expectations, we engage in a thorough and ongoing range of assessment procedures, covering all areas of learning. Children give indications of their learning all of the time through what they say, what they do, how they approach activities etc, and it is primarily by observing children that judgements can be made to inform records and planning. We note in particular the learning which a child demonstrates spontaneously, independently and consistently in a range of contexts. Specific time for planned observations is allocated each week, which may take place in the form of a general classroom observation, e.g. of an activity, an observation on a particular child or on one of the statements from Development Matters.

Our EYFSP results are submitted to the Headteacher and County at the end of the academic year. EYFS staff use the EYFS Profile Handbook in conjunction with the Profile Exemplification Materials to ensure that judgements are fair and correct. We actively engage with local schools in monitoring and moderation events (across prime areas of learning), as well as attending Local Authority briefing and moderation events. The Assessment and reporting arrangements (ARA) contains further details on assessing and reporting the EYFS Profile and we ensure that we follow this statutory guidance.

Parents are invited to attend Autumn and Spring Term consultations which give them an indication of the level at which their child is currently working, as well as development points to work on over the coming term. We aim to ensure that the children's books also reflect their achievements and 'next steps' so that parents can use them to help them identify strengths and weaknesses. We also operate an 'open-door' policy, with parents and carers having the opportunity to discuss their child throughout the academic year. At the end of the year a written report summarising the child's achievements and their characteristics of learning is sent to parents and carers. This is also discussed with the Key Stage 1 teacher in preparation for their transition to Year 1.

Pupils' achievements are celebrated through classroom displays, notes home to parents, or Pupil of the Week certificates presented as part of the whole school Celebration Assembly on a Friday afternoon. Learning Journeys also record successes in an ongoing way.

INCLUSION

At Queen Boudica Primary School we believe that all our children and families matter and value the diversity of individuals. All children are treated fairly regardless of race, religion or abilities (please refer to our school Equal Opportunities policy). In the EYFS we set realistic and challenging expectations, with the intention that all children meet the majority of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the stage, regardless of their background.

We plan 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.

This is done through the following strategies:

- Planning opportunities to build upon and develop children's strengths, helping them to learn effectively
- Using a wide range of teaching strategies
- Providing safe learning environments
- Using diverse resources that promote inclusive learning

- Monitoring children's progress, supporting and extending where necessary
- Interacting with children's families in order to build up a picture of the child before they start, and to support them as they continue through their Reception year

It is important to us that all children feel 'safe'. We aim to educate children on boundaries, rules and limits and to help them understand why these exist. We provide children with choices to help them develop this life skill. We aim to protect the physical and psychological well-being of all children, and all members of staff in the school undertake regular Child Protection Training.

FURTHER SAFEGUARDING

Before entering EYFS at Queen Boudica Primary School, parents/carers receive information about their child's class teacher (key person). This may on occasions, involve a joint partnership between teacher and LSA or Key Person (for example, in the case of a child with identified SEN). The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person seeks to engage and support parents/carers in guiding their child's development at home.

As part of our data collection, regular photographs of children are taken in order to document progress and achievement. These photos are only taken on a school camera, and are stored in school and on a school-owned password protected memory stick. File names are anonymous (usually related to the date that the photographs have been taken) and are only used for school purposes e.g. printed for learning journeys, displays or parent events. Mobile phones are not used in the setting for photographic or any other purposes.

See also the Safeguarding Policy.

TRANSITION INTO SCHOOL

We work in partnership with local Early Years settings and parents/carers to develop good links and share relevant information in order to ensure the best provision for new entrants and enable a smooth transition into school. Before starting Queen Boudica, the EYFS class teachers visit children in their existing settings (where possible), make phone contact with the settings, or home. Towards the end of the summer term, children are invited to attend 2 play based sessions in their new setting in order to familiarise themselves with the school environment, staff members and peers. A transition group is also run by the Children's Centre (and members of school staff) during the latter half of the summer term.

TRANSITION TO YEAR 1

Transition to Year 1 builds upon and extends the experiences children have had in the Foundation. During the first half of the Autumn Term Year 1, staff adopt similar routines, expectations and activities as in the Foundation Stage. There continues to be opportunities for active child-initiated independent learning through planned structured play. The amount of time for whole class teaching in Year 1 is gradually increased as appropriate to the needs of the children.

To ensure that children continue to make good progress in their learning, and that appropriate learning opportunities and activities are planned for in the Autumn Term, information from the Foundation Profile is shared with Year 1 teachers at the end of the

Summer Term. We work closely with the teachers in Year 1 to ensure that their first term of Year 1 echoes the key principles from the EYFS. Some children may still be working within the EYFS and Year 1 teachers refer to the curriculum and assessment guidance to ensure that the curriculum content is appropriate to each individual. Teachers also spend time in the EYFS classes in order to 'baseline' children before they enter Key Stage 1.

Children have the opportunity to meet the children and adults that they are likely to be in a new class with during the latter part of the Summer Term. They also join in with more whole-school activities, such as break times and more frequent assemblies. Circle Time discussions focus around the transition, allowing children opportunities to talk about their worries and concerns. Parents and Carers also have an opportunity to meet their child's new class teacher before the September term starts.

Please refer to the Transition Plan for further information about transition.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

The EYFS is monitored by the Foundation Stage Leader to ensure that the implementation of the statutory framework meets the legal requirements for children's learning, development and welfare and is in line with the school's policies, also that standards are improved through focused analysis of results and clear action planning to identify ways forward. The Governing Body approves this policy and participates actively in forming the aims of the policy. They will take into account the views of the staff when considering policy decisions. This decision making is carried out with regard to the current framework and national initiatives, the standards achieved by children in the EYFS, and in response to guidance and evidence on educational standards received from the Headteacher/ Foundation Stage Leader. The Headteacher, Foundation Stage Leader and LA Advisors will monitor the quality of teaching and learning to an agreed protocol and schedule.