



Blanche Nevile School

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Policy

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Introduction

This document outlines the philosophy, aims and principles of early years learning and teaching in Blanche Nevile Primary School. The document underpins practice in all areas of provision.

“Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. 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, 2017.*

Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They actively reach out to interact with other 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.

Early childhood is the foundation on which children build the rest of their lives. At Blanche Nevile we greatly value the important role that the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) plays in laying secure foundations for future learning and development. However, we also believe early childhood is valid in itself, as part of life. **It is important to view the EYFS as preparation for life and not simply preparation for the next stage of education.** The EYFS applies to children from birth to the end of the Reception year. At Blanche Nevile the EYFS applies to children attending from the age of three years to the end of the Reception year when they are five years of age.

Aims

It is every child’s right to grow up safe, healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and with economic wellbeing. At Blanche Nevile the overarching aim of the EYFS is to help young children achieve these five outcomes. We aim to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which will enable each child to develop personally, socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically, creatively and intellectually to their full potential. Each child is valued as an individual and learning and teaching is based on the understanding that children develop at different rates.

At Blanche Nevile we aim to:

- Provide a safe, challenging, stimulating, caring and bi-lingual environment, which is sensitive to the needs of the child, including children with additional needs
- Provide a broad, balanced, relevant and creative curriculum that will set in place firm foundations for future learning and development
- Provide opportunities for children to learn through planned, purposeful play in all areas of learning and development in the indoor and outdoor environment
- Use and value what each child can do, assessing their individual needs and helping each child to progress
- Enable choice and decision-making, fostering independence and self-confidence
- Work in partnership with specialist Speech and Language Therapists
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and value their contributions
- Ensure that all children feel valued, respected and included and that classroom resources and activities reflect the culture and language of their homes
- Ensure that planning documents detail how pupils are taught, what is taught, that it is linked to their learning environment, key signs/words given to parents and enrichment activities reflect the topic.

The EYFS is based upon four principles:

- Every child is a **unique child**, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- Children learn to be strong and independent through **positive relationships** with parents and key workers
- Children learn and develop best in **enabling environments**, where they are safe, challenged, engaged and where experiences respond to their individual needs
- **Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates.** All areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

A Unique child Inclusion

All children and their families are valued within our school. We believe that children should be treated as individuals and that they should have equal access to the EYFS curriculum.

We give our children every opportunity to achieve their best. We help them do this by planning to meet the needs of all genders, children with special educational needs, children who are more able, children with disabilities, children from all social and cultural backgrounds, children from different ethnic groups and those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

We strongly believe that early identification of special needs is crucial in enabling staff to support the development of each child and fully meet their needs. Concerns are always discussed with parents/carers at an early stage in an open, honest and sensitive manner and we will always seek their support and involvement.

The school works closely with a multi-disciplinary team of specialists to provide additional information and advice to practitioners and parents and for arranging external intervention and support where necessary. These include Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Psychologists and National Deaf CAMHS, amongst others.

Positive Relationships

At Blanche Nevile we recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful and professional relationships with the children and their families.

Key person

Young children need to develop relationships to support their emotional wellbeing and learning. A key working approach provides the child with a special adult to enable them to develop a secure attachment, the opportunity for the practitioner to develop a supportive relationship with the parents/carers and share the child's progress and development. Due to our small class size all practitioners work closely with all children, however children will also be assigned a key person.

Parents as partners

We recognise that parents/carers are the child's first and most enduring educators. When parents/carers and practitioners work together in early years settings the results have a positive impact on the child's development. We feel a successful partnership needs to be a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise and so we aim to provide a variety of opportunities to support this.

Home - School Communication

The Foundation Stage team recognise that in order to maximise a child's potential to learn and achieve there needs to be open and consistent communication between home and school. As few of our parents come into school on a regular basis we have devised a number of ways to ensure that information about a child's progress or next steps, or information relating to the EYFS is shared:

- Offering home visits to all new starters so parents/carers and staff can share information about children and about our school
- Using a home-school communication book or phone calls or emails to discuss weekly events or information about individual children
- Sharing information about the curriculum through meetings, sending newsletters/leaflets home about topics, displays, informal discussions, parent's evenings, Seesaw (online platform).
- Providing opportunities for parents/carers to attend social events with children and staff e.g. Coffee Mornings, Christmas productions and class assemblies.
- Inviting parents/carers into the classroom to share expertise/interests and time to work with and help the children and staff in a variety of ways.
- Regularly meeting with parents/carers to share children's achievements and together discuss next steps for development.

Enabling Environments

At Blanche Nevile we recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children's development. We aim to create an attractive, welcoming and stimulating learning environment which will encourage children to explore, investigate and learn through first-hand experience. We also aim to make it a place where children feel secure and confident and are challenged to develop their independence. Activities are planned for both the inside and outside environment. Children have the freedom to move between the indoor and outdoor classroom throughout the school day. Effective learning builds on and extends what children know and can already do. Our planning is informed by observations we have made of the children in order to understand and consider their current interests, experiences, development and learning needs.

Planning

There are three stages of planning the curriculum:

Long Term Planning

The school Nursery and Reception classes currently organise the curriculum through agreed half/termly topics over the period of the academic year. The topics cover areas that are familiar to young children and also enable us to deliver a creative and balanced curriculum. The long-term cycle planning reflects a balance of the seven areas of learning and development and the Characteristics of Effective Learning from the EYFS.

Medium Term Planning

We address particular aspects of the curriculum in more detail for each term. Learning objectives, assessment opportunities and activities and experiences for each area of learning and development are identified.

Short Term Planning

Each week we focus on four key children and consider their interests, developments and areas of need. We set outcomes according to what we have observed of that child, the areas of learning and development in the EYFS and also in reference to the child's Education Health and Care Plan.

In addition, we plan a variety of differentiated activities based around the seven areas of learning.

The seven areas of learning are:

- Personal Social and Emotional Development
- Literacy
- Communication and language
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Physical Development
- Expressive Art and Design

These plans are developed in two ways. Firstly, through on-going observation of child initiated or spontaneous activity and secondly through planned play opportunities (indoors and outdoors). This allows for flexibility in response to individual children's needs and interests and for revision and modification of plans. Through this, learning objectives for the next short-term plan are identified. It is informed secondly by referring to the medium term plans containing objectives and activities/experiences in the half-termly topic.

Observation and Assessment

Our Early Years Curriculum is based on the principles of child development and the educational programmes in the revised EYFS Statutory Framework 2021.

When new children arrive at Blanche Nevile Primary School, information is gathered from induction, previous settings, parents, the transition period, other professionals and EHCPs if they have them. In EYFS, we also carry out baseline assessments and complete the mandatory Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) for Reception children to form a holistic view of the child. Information collected is collated, organised, analysed and used to plan for and adapt/inform provision.

The main EYFS assessment method is through practitioners' high quality interactions and observations of children in different teaching and learning contexts, including both adult focused activities and child-initiated play. High quality interactions take place daily. Practitioners make time to carry out planned interactions with individuals and groups of children regularly, where developing early communication and language skills is key. All practitioners are involved in high quality interactions with children and use these to support their developing knowledge of individual children. All observations made are shared and discussed within the EYFS team during scheduled meetings. Some observations are recorded in children's individual 'Profile Books' and the online learning platform, Seesaw, which parents also have access to.

We assess each child's level of development against the Early Learning Goals. "The ELGs should not be used as a curriculum or in any way to limit the wide variety of rich experiences that are crucial to child development, from being read to frequently to playing with friends." Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage 2021. Within the final term of the EYFS, we provide a written summary to parents, reporting their progress against the Early Learning Goals and indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expected levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile. We use the ELGs to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development, their readiness for Year 1. We give a reasonable opportunity for the parents to discuss these judgements with the teacher. The parents of nursery children receive a general report which gives a comment about how the child is engaging with each provision area within the nursery.

Statutory assessment for reception is currently the Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA).

- The RBA is an activity-based assessment of pupils' starting points in language, communication literacy and mathematics.
- The RBA is a short task-based assessment, children use practical resources to complete these tasks and staff record the results on a laptop, computer or tablet.
- Schools are required to carry out the assessment within the first 6 weeks of pupils starting Reception.
- Numerical scores are not shared and the data will only be used at the end of Year 6 to form the school-level progress measure. (These measures will be published for the all-through primaries in the summer of 2028 for the first time.)
- Teachers receive a series of short, narrative statements that tell them how their pupils performed in the assessment. These can be used to inform teaching within the first term.

At Blanche Nevile, we are able to make adaptations to the resources for our pupils if deemed necessary and we also have modified assessments materials where adjustments to the standard resources may not be sufficient.

The EYFSP (Early Years Foundation Stage Profile) takes place at the end of the school year in reception and is reported to the local authority.

'Each child's development must be assessed against the early learning goals. Practitioners must indicate whether children are meeting expected levels of development, or not yet reaching expecting levels ('emerging'). This is the EYFS Profile Statutory Framework.

Learning and Development

At Blanche Nevile we recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are interconnected.

Learning and Teaching

Effective learning and teaching is supported through:

- The partnership between staff and parents/carers that helps our children to feel secure at school and to develop a sense of wellbeing and achievement
- The understanding that staff have knowledge of how children develop and learn and how this must be reflected in their teaching
- The range of approaches that provide first-hand experiences, give clear explanations, make appropriate interventions and extend and develop the children's play, talk or other means of communication
- The carefully planned curriculum that helps children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage

- The provision for children to take part in activities that build on and extend their interests and develop their intellectual, physical, social and emotional abilities
- The encouragement for children to communicate and talk about their learning and to develop independence and self-management
- The support for learning, with appropriate and accessible space, facilities and equipment, both indoors and outdoors, including the effective use of ICT
- The identification, through observations, of children's progress and future learning needs, which are regularly shared with parents.

Play and Exploration

The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment – playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpin learning and development across all areas and support the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.

At Blanche Nevile we do not make a distinction between work and play. We recognise that play is a powerful tool for learning and development:

- Play offers children opportunities to explore feelings and relationships, ideas and materials, connections and consequences
- Play encourages children to struggle, to take risks and to become resilient as learners
- Play empowers children to make choices, to solve problems and to be independent in their learning
- Play enables children to express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.

We support children's learning through planned play activities, through observation of child-initiated or adult-led play activities and then provide the most effective learning opportunities. We believe that it is important for adults to support and develop children's learning through play, by getting involved in the play themselves and modelling by example. It also provides an excellent opportunity to extend children's language and communication skills. We fully recognise that, through play, skills are developed and practised and that play is essential for physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional, behavioural and social development.

The Characteristics of Effective Learning

The Characteristics of Effective Learning are essential skills which children need to be able to fully access the EYFS. They include:

Playing and exploring

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to 'have a go'

Active learning

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keep trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Thinking Creatively and Critically

- Having their own idea
- Making links
- Choosing ways to do things

Areas of Learning and Development

The EYFS is made up of seven Areas of Learning: Three Prime Areas which are fundamental aspects of child development and four Specific Areas, which include essential skills and knowledge. The Specific Areas can only develop once the Prime Areas are well established.

Prime Areas of Learning

- Communication & Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Physical Development

Specific Areas of Learning

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the World
- Creative Development

While these seven areas provide a framework for the early years curriculum, young children's learning does not easily divide up into distinct areas. A particular experience may develop learning over several of the different areas at any one time. All areas are delivered through a balance of adult led and child-initiated activities. In each area there are Early Learning Goals (ELGs) that define the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the EYFS.

Communication and Language

At Blanche Nevile we provide children with a rich linguistic environment and plenty of opportunity to learn and extend their spoken English and British Sign Language Skills. Sign Supported English is used at all times of the day and the children develop their joint attention and listening skills by learning to look between the speaker and the activity. There is a heavy focus on role play and experiential learning, which allows children to use new vocabulary in meaningful situations. VERVE Therapy is offered 1:1 or in group sessions with a specialist Speech and Language Therapist. Staff in EYFS are trained in leading attention groups. Communication follows the pupil's preferred mode of communication which may be spoken, British Sign Language or Signed Supported English. Deaf members of staff provide positive role models for all pupils. Weekly BSL sessions are offered to pupils with the school's BSL Tutor. Regular sessions with the school's Audiology Support Assistant are provided. Parents are encouraged to attend BSL classes on a weekly basis at Blanche Nevile School without any cost due to the importance of children having full access to language and not becoming isolated.

Staff are trained in basic audiology; they are able to check Cochlear Implants, BAHAs, Hearing Aids and other assisted listening devices to make sure they are working, as well as to change batteries, tubes etc. The LING Assessment is carried out daily first thing every morning.

Personal, Social and Emotional development

The Personal, Social and Emotional development of our children is central to everything we do at Blanche Nevile, and the children are able to learn and grow in an engaging, nurturing and safe environment. Children learn to play cooperatively and take turns, forming positive relationships with adults and other children. They have the opportunity to mix with both deaf and hearing peers and learn how to interact and communicate confidently, developing a positive image of themselves as a deaf person. Circle time using puppets with signing hands are used to model various behaviours and visual resources are also used. Pupils are taught about Deaf identity, understanding their emotions and how to self-regulate their behaviour. Successes are celebrated daily, as well as during weekly certificate assemblies.

Physical development

We offer lots of opportunities for children to develop their fine and gross motor skills. Large-scale movements are developed on the climbing frame and obstacle courses we have in the playground, during focus PE sessions and during Forest School visits to Highgate Woods, where children learn how to climb and scramble safely over fallen trees and logs. We get children 'writing ready' by developing arm and hand muscles, for example during Dough Gym sessions, and they work on a good pencil grip by using tweezers, tongs, scissors and other one-handed tools. The children are encouraged to think about what is needed to stay healthy and safe, such as eating well and using scissors and other equipment carefully and are encouraged to become more independent in managing their personal hygiene. Sensory circuits are offered

to some pupils. Reception pupils take part in PE lessons with mainstream hearing peers on a weekly basis, led by a specialist PE Teacher.

Literacy

We use a system called Visual Phonics to help the children learn about how and where letter sounds are produced. They practice phonics every day and have lots of opportunities to apply their skills in reading and writing activities. The children learn about writing in meaningful ways, for instance by creating a shopping list that they then use during a visit to the local shop. They learn to write simple words. Sentences using their knowledge of letter sounds are introduced to some 'tricky' words, such as 'the' and 'to'. Storytelling and reading are central to our work here, and the children have time every day to read and retell stories using puppets and role play. Phonic packs are made and given to each pupil. Parents and carers of all pupils are expected to read with children daily and comment in the reading record book. Guided reading books are given to Reception children and changed weekly. Every week all pupils have the opportunity to participate in Buddy Reading. Story sacks have been made to match each story shared with the pupils, in order to help them understand the story line and develop their comprehension using tactile resources.

Mathematics

Maths skills are developed in all areas of the room, from paying for items in our role play shop, to exploring capacity at the water tray. The children learn to count reliably from 1-20, carefully counting out objects as well as unmovable items such as claps or steps. They practice ordering numbers to 20 and finding 1 more and 1 less. They learn to add and take away practical situations using up to 10 objects and solve simple problems. They learn to name and describe shapes and make models and pictures using flat and solid shapes.

Understanding the World

Our children are involved in many activities that allow them to explore the natural world, from visits to Highgate Wood to bug hunts in the Peace Garden. They investigate changes by playing with ice and other natural materials, taking part in lots of cooking activities and observing what happens when seeds are planted. Every year we look after a clutch of duck eggs and the children help care for them once they have hatched. Pupils go to Highgate Woods every week. During the Spring Term Blanche Nevile pupils attend Forest School with their mainstream hearing peers from Highgate Primary School. Blanche Nevile children also go to Highgate Woods every week to consolidate and further their understanding of the outdoors and to teach road safety.

The children have the opportunity to use digital cameras and play with games on the Interactive White Board. Termly trips are linked to topics and organised to gain hands on experiences, for example, the Science Museum, London Zoo etc.

Expressive arts and design

At Blanche Nevile, the children have free access to painting and creative modelling activities every day. They undertake projects to learn new skills, such as collage, marbling paper or mixing colours, but also have the chance to create their own drawings and models too.

Music is an important tool for teaching and learning in the Early Years. Music is used to demonstrate and explore turn taking, pitch, tone, dynamics and volume. These are important building blocks for language and communication. Music is also used as a method of engaging pupils with learning. Songs and rhymes help children to attend and to sustain attention. They also provide repetition and rehearsal to embed their musical skills, knowledge and understanding. Percussion instruments are available for children to play with on a regular basis. Musical Journey programme is used. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a signed/singing choir on a weekly basis led by KAOS.

Safeguarding and Welfare

At Blanche Nevile we recognise that children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them.

Blanche Nevile School recognises the importance of providing an ethos and environment within school that will help children to feel safe, secure and respected, encourage them to talk openly and enable them to feel confident that they will be listened to.

We recognise that children who are abused or witness violence may find it difficult to develop a sense of self-worth. They may feel helplessness, humiliation and some sense of blame. The school may be the only stable, secure and predictable elements in the lives of children at risk. When at school their behaviour may be challenging and defiant or they may be withdrawn.

We also recognise that Deaf children can be more vulnerable to abuse, as:

- they are likely to come into contact with a greater number of services than hearing children
- there can be negative social attitudes towards children with disabilities that can affect people's willingness to believe that abuse has taken place
- some hard of hearing/deaf children will find it more difficult to communicate what they are feeling
- sometimes behaviour can be misinterpreted as being a consequence of a disability when in fact it is a sign of abuse.

How we keep children safe

- Children and young people are listened to, valued and respected. This is a real strength at Blanche Nevile School.
- Staff are aware of the need to be alert to the signs of abuse and know what to do with their concerns
- All paid and unpaid staff are subject to rigorous safeguarding recruitment procedures
- All paid and unpaid staff are given appropriate support, induction and training
- All child protection concerns should be acted upon immediately. If you are concerned that a child might be at risk or is actually suffering abuse, you should tell the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or anyone in the DSL Team
- Blanche Nevile School undertakes an audit of its safeguarding and child protection policies, procedures and training needs each year as part of its review and evaluation cycle. Updates and amendments are identified and responded to. This audit is considered by the Governing Body, which also has a designated governor for child protection
- All staff employed in EYFS are required to be a fluent signer to ensure all pupils have a rich language environment and full access to communication.

For further details please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.